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Government Teachers in West Bank Go on Strike

Government school teachers in the West Bank carried out their threatened partial strike May 7 to protest diminishing salaries and deteriorating work conditions.

The Ramallah district branch of the General Committee of Government School Teachers (GCGST) reported 100 percent of its members participated in the strike. The Nablus district also reported a sizable number of teachers went on strike for two class periods, as called for by the GCGST last week.

Al Sha'ab Arabic daily reported May 8 that a number of school principals informed their education departments about the striking teachers. It is expected that teachers who took part in the strike will be punished, particularly because the GCGST is not officially recognised by the Israeli military in spite of years of efforts by its members to obtain official recognition as the representative of government school teachers. The GCGST, established in 1980 to protect teachers' rights, currently has 8000 members throughout the West Bank.

At a press conference held May 5 at the Professional Unions offices in Beit Hanina, the GCGST outlined its complaints, concentrating on the deterioration of the purchasing power of their salaries, which have now declined to the equivalent of JD70, although they were JD120 a year ago. The teachers are demanding a 100 percent increase in salaries, a cut in income tax, enhanced health benefits to cover spouse and child subsidies, and other demands. The teachers said they were forced to call for the strike because the Israeli education officer has always ignored their demands in the past.

Members of the GCGST also spoke at the press conference about the measures taken against them by West Bank education departments. These measures include refusing promotions and effecting frequent transfers of teachers, regardless of transportation and living inconvenience.

The Ramallah district branch of the GCGST commented on the reasons for the strike, saying the West Bank government school teachers have been suffering great difficulties since the beginning of the occupation. It said these difficulties have worsened over time, making life unbearable for teachers. It stressed that a 100 percent increase in salary is the bare minimum they are demanding and that their salaries should be linked to the Jordanian dinar. After all, the Ramallah branch pointed out, the Israeli government collects all its taxes in the West Bank at a rate linked to the Jordanian dinar.

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Al Quds Workers Win Strike Against Pay Cut

After six days of open strike, the 62 employees at *Al Quds* Arabic daily won their demand that the publisher cancel a decision to pay salaries at the bank rate of exchange, which would cut salaries by 30 percent. The employees returned to work May 7 after the publisher conceded to their demands.

According to employees, publisher Mahmoud Abu Zuluf paid them April's salary at the Israeli bank-quoted rate of the Jordanian dinar rather than the rate offered by money-changers. The bank rate for the JD is currently listed as IS2300 whereas the market exchange rate, which was used to calculate *Al Quds* salaries until April, is IS3100 for JD1. Employees' salaries are in Jordanian dinars, but recalculated monthly in Israeli shekels.

Reacting to the publisher's moves, the employees handed Abu Zuluf a petition April 30 demanding to be paid according to the market exchange rate for the dinar. Abu Zuluf reportedly rejected the demand. Employees handed him a second petition the next day, threatening to go on strike if he would not agree. The second petition was also rejected, forcing the employees to go on strike and halting production of the most widely circulated Arabic daily.

Explaining his reason for the sudden change, Abu Zuluf, a prominent local businessman, claimed that his newspaper is facing financial difficulties. He also alleged that the strike was politically motivated, but did not elaborate.

The employees issued a statement rejecting Abu Zuluf's excuse of bad financial straits. The statement, dated May 3, said *Al Quds* is the most widely sold paper in the occupied territories and receives a large number of advertisements, all paid in Jordanian dinars.

Speaking on behalf of the striking employees at a press conference at Hakawati Theatre May 5, Mahmoud Shaker denied that the strike had any political motivations. He said the conflict was a work dispute and that all the workers were seeking was to be paid like employees of other West Bank institutions. He said, "There is no way the strike can be called political unless wanting to get bread and milk for one's children can be considered political."

Al Quds employees receive an average salary of JD60 (US$147) a month. While payday usually comes at the end of the month for all local institutions, *al Quds* employees are paid the rate of the dinar according to the 25th of each month. Some employees said this means a difference of many shekels, considering the daily decrease in the market value of the shekel. The employees want this policy to be changed as well, and demand to be paid in Jordanian dinars or to be paid in shekels based on the market rate of exchange on the last day of the month.

On May 6, Abu Zuluf met a five-member team representing the employees to negotiate an agreement. A third party was also present to arbitrate the dispute. According to the employees, Abu Zuluf offered them a compromise plan in which they will be paid on the 28th at an exchange rate half-way between the market and bank exchange rates. Abu Zuluf refused to pay wages for the period of the strike, but promised that no one would be fired. This clause was also in the plan.

The 62 striking employees rejected the compromise plan outright. They also delegated the five-member team to continue negotiating with Abu Zuluf on their behalf, but not to make any final agreement without returning to all of them for approval.

Following further arbitration, the employees signed an agreement with Abu Zuluf May 7 which met their demands, and called off the strike. The newspaper was out in print again the next day.

Continued on page 15

FGSU Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Fascist Defeat

The Federation of Palestinian Graduates from Socialist Universities sponsored a festival May 8 at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre in East Jerusalem on the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe and the victory over fascism.

Festival participants filled the 400-seat auditorium and spilled over onto the corridors and staircases inside and outside the theatre. The festival's slogan was: "Long Live the Victory Over Fascism."

Bassam Shaka'a, the deposed mayor of Nablus, gave a moving speech in which he praised the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, which, he said, "has continued to be a true friend to the Palestinian people." Shaka'a also stressed the need for national unity "in order to protect the PLO and its accomplishments."

Other speakers included Dr Riyad Mashal, head of the Federation of Students, who spoke of the solidarity between the Soviet Union and the Palestinian people. Ibrahim Dakkak, head of the West Bank Engineers Union, denounced US President Ronald Reagan's recent visit to the Bitburg cemetery in Germany, which contains graves of SS officials. Adel Ghanem, head of the West Bank Federation of Unions, praised the victories against fascism and denounced "the imperialist aims against the liberation movements of the world." Dr Ahmad Hamzeh Natshe, member of the Palestine National Council who also criticised Reagan's visit to the German cemetery, commended the sacrifice of the Soviet people in their struggle against fascism and for a better life.

Israeli soldiers prepare to pull out from their present positions to new ones along the Israeli border./AFP photo

29th Ceasefire Ends Beirut Fighting

A tense calm shadowed the Lebanese capital of Beirut May 8 after a week of heavy fighting that claimed the lives of 77 people and injured over 400. There were reports that the Phalangist Party was weakening.

The calm came after the 29th ceasefire in 10 days halted the fiercest fighting in a year between rival Lebanese militias. Heavy artillery, including mortars and rockets, were used in the city fighting.

An official of the Phalangist Party in Beirut told an AFP correspondent May 8 that the Phalangists are now living "their darkest hour" since the party was founded in the 1930's. The Phalangist leader, who refused to be identified, said that the party "feels completely isolated for the first time in 10 years. Even the Maronites are not supporting us." The official blamed the situation on the policies of the new Phalangist leader, Samir Ja'ja'. He said that Ja'ja's attacks in the Sidon area and camps and his fiery statements prompted nationalist milita attacks against villages east of Sidon. Ja'ja' troops had to withdraw after they shelled Sidon camps for a month.

Another Phalangist leader told AFP that mobilising militias has become a hard task. He said that only five percent heeded a recent call to join the Phalange militias "because they have no incentive to fight." The AFP report goes on to say that an atmosphere of criticism and complaint is discernable at all levels of the Phalangist militias, from the General Command staff to militia members.

Meanwhile Lebanese politicians are trying to make this latest ceasefire stick. Lebanese President Amin Gemayel, as the head of the Lebanese Military Council, met with Prime Minister Rashid Karameh May 8.

Gemayel also met with Hussein al-Husseini, head of the Lebanese Parliament, in a bid to save the deteriorating security situation.

Israel Tries to Cut Losses by Restricting S. Lebanese

The Israeli occupation army has imposed severe restrictions on Lebanese residents of the "secuirity zone" border area, in order to control attacks against the Israeli occupation army and their surrogates, the South Lebanon Army (SLA) and the "National Guard."

According to the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv*, the army distributed leaflets last week containing a set of orders prohibiting Lebanese residents from carrying weapons, even for hunting, without licences. The leaflets said curfews were being enforced every night outside the cities and towns in the area, and the residents were not allowed to travel outside their towns and villages at night. Furthermore, the Israeli army regulationsspecified that the two-month-old ban on travelling alone in cars during the day and the requirement that each car have at least two passengers remain in effect. However, a new regulation requiring that cars must travel in groups of two was added to restrictions already in force. Moreover, the leaflet stated that the Israeli army and the SLA would hold residents responsible for the actions of any friend or relative who comes to visit from outside the occupied "security zone."

Despite the strict Israeli regulations, an Israeli military spokesperson reported that a soldier was wounded May 8 — the first Israeli casualty in the "security zone" as the Hebrew press put it — when a RPG shell was fired at an Israeli army unit near the town of Qantara. The report said an armoured personnel carrier was damaged.

In another incident, according to Israeli military reports, an Israeli gunboat clashed with and sank a rubber boat and its five passengers off the coast of Tyre May 8. The report said the boat was heading towards Israel when it was intercepted. The rubber dinghy tried to get away but the ship chased it and ultimately downed it, killing the five passengers.

Overall, the relative drop in military attacks in Israeli-occupied south Lebanon after the latest army pullback has been attributed to the strict control exercised by the Shi'ite Amal movement over areas evacuated by the Israeli army. The Hebrew press has been quoting Israeli officials as saying they have reached an agreement with Amal to prevent Palestinian and Lebanese commandos from launching attacks against Israel from the area it controls. *Hadashot* daily reported May 9 that Amal leader Nabih Berri said, "We will not allow Katyusha rockets to be fired at Israel from southern Lebanon."

US Reiterates Stand on Non-PLO Delegation

A US official stated May 7 that the administration is not opposed to meeting with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation if the "Palestinian delegation contains Palestine National Council (PNC) members not actively involved in the PLO." Meeting in Baghdad, the PLO Executive Committee and the Fatah Central Council vetoed April 25 any proposal that does not include the PLO to be represented on an equal basis with the other parties to the Middle East conflict.

A Palestinian source in Jerusalem told *Al Fajr* that Murphy had advanced the proposal to local Palestinians during his recent visit to the area. The source said that Murphy's proposal, which was transmitted to the Baghdad meeting by Fatah Central Council member Hani al-Hassan, contained a number of conditions. According to the source, who refused to be identified, the US proposal required that the PLO not announce that it chose the Palestinian delegation or that the delegates represent the PLO.

Palestinians in the occupied territories had twice rejected offers by Murphy that they participate in the proposed Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. In a signed letter and again in private conversation in April, Palestinians told Murphy that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that the Americans need to talk directly to the PLO and to recognise the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Ibrahim Dakkak, head of the West Bank Engineers Association, called Murphy's proposals attempts to give "legitimacy" to the US moves in the area. Dakkak, who boycotted Murphy's meeting in Jerusalem, said that US administrations continuously look for ways of bypassing the Palestinians' legitimate leadership.

PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat arrived in Amman May 7 on a short visit following visits to Sudan and Saudi Arabia. Speaking to reporters in Amman, Arafat said that he will head a Palestinian-Jordanian delegation on a trip to China to explain the February 11 Palestinian-Jordanian agreement.

UNRWA Marks 35th

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which began operation in May 1950. In their press release concerning the anniversary, UNRWA said their status as a "temporary" agency means they continue to face an uncertain future.

Commissioner-General Olof Rydbeck announced that two new field directors and a personnel director were to be appointed in May. Robert Gallagher, currently director of UNRWA operations in the West Bank, has been named director of UNRWA affairs in Lebanon. He replaces John Defrates, who has been UNRWA's director in Lebanon since 1982 and was previously director of relief services. Mr Defrates is retiring this month after 25 years' service with UNRWA.

Director of personnel, Robert Hopkins, has been named director of UNRWA operations in the West Bank. The new director of personnel is Ele Sauf, currently deputy director of UNRWA affairs in Jordan. He will be replaced in Jordan by Bernard Mills, the former assistant director in south Lebanon.

AJA Elects New Committee

The Arab Journalists Association (AJA) of the West Bank and Gaza elected May 3 a new nine-member administrative committee following the sudden resignation of the previous committee. Out of 110 AJA members, 103 took part in the elections.

According to the new chairperson of AJA, Radwan Abu Ayyash, managing editor of the weekly *Al Awdeh* magazine, the new administrative committee wants to increase the activities of the AJA to benefit Palestinian journalists. This will include improving work conditions for association members and reinstating free family health insurance.

The previous committee, headed by Akram Haniya, editor-in-chief of *Al Sha'ab* daily, resigned April 12, six months before scheduled elections, following a heated debate inside the AJA general assembly over a union health insurance plan. Since members of the association started receiving health insurance two years ago, the premiums were paid in total by the AJA. However, due to increased insurance costs, the AJA proposed to collect a JD5 monthly fee from members to cover part of the costs. On April 12, the general assembly held an extraordinary session — the first of its kind — and voted, 36-34, to overrule the administrative committee's decision. The assembly demanded that the AJA raise the insurance fees from more lucrative sources, such as from publishers of local newspapers. The administrative committee immediately resigned, citing inability to meet the demands of the general assembly.

Seven of the nine committee members-elect ran as a single bloc but all nominees are elected by individual vote. The first nine receiving the highest number of votes win, with the committee chairperson elected by consensus from the new committee. Sixteen journalists ran for committee positions this year. Abu Ayyash was the highest vote-getter, with 65.

Commenting on the new structure of the administrative committee, Abu Ayyash said, "I would have preferred it to reflect national unity, but this does not mean the administrative committee is not representative of all member journalists."

Hanna Amirah, managing editor of *Al Tali'a* weekly, who is the only opposition member in the new administration, charged that about 40 percent of the members have been denied the right of true representation due to the outcome of the elections. Amirah was the only member of his five-man bloc who won enough votes to get a seat in the administrative committee although the bloc as a whole received 40 percent of the votes.

More than 90 percent of the voters voted for candidates by bloc. The other 10 percent split their votes for candidates from various blocs.

Other elected members include: Salah Zuhaikeh, *(Al Sha'ab)*, 64 votes; Talal Abu Afifeh *(Al Fajr)*, 62; Basman Abu Rumelieh *(Al Fajr)*, 61; Hassan Waheidi *(Al Fajr)*, 58; Na'im Toubassi *(Al Sha'ab)*, 56; Azmi Abu Gharbieh *(Al Fajr)*, 53; Hanna Amirah *(Al Tali'a)*, 42; and Ziad Abu Ziad (the new weekly, *Al Mawqif)*, 42.

In the administration's first meeting May 6, positions were distributed among the members. In addition to Abu Ayyash as president, Abu Afifeh was elected secretary, Zuhaikeh in charge of external relations, Toubassi and Abu Gharbieh in charge of internal relations, Waheidi and Abu Rumelieh treasurers, Amirah and Abu Gharbieh for cultural affairs, and Abu Rumelieh and Toubassi for social affairs.

The new administration also announced plans to open a library for journalists, to increase member participation in activities and to expand the current office.

Progressive Students Front Win Bethlehem U. Elections

Bethlehem University students elected a new student council May 8 for the next academic year. The Progressive Students Front coalition won six out of the nine-seat council, including the four top positions. The remaining seats were distributed to the Fahd Qawasmeh bloc (two seats) and the Islamic bloc (one seat).

Ahmad Jaradat is the new president, with 479 votes. Imad Rizq is vice-president, with 485 votes; Jihad Sa'adeh secretary, 482 votes; and Ayman Hassan, treasurer, 479 votes. All are from the Progressive Students Front coalition. The Cultural and Heritage Club chairmanships were also won by two coalition members.

The Fahd Qawasmeh youth bloc won the Art and Social Club chairmanships. The Islamic bloc, which entered the elections for the first time, won the Athletic Club chairmanship. The Progressive Students Front coalition is made up of the Progressive Student Action Front and the Progressive Students bloc endorsed by the Students National Alliance bloc, which withdrew from the elections in favour of the Front coalition. The Student Unity bloc ran unsuccessfully on its own. The Progressive Students have been the majority at Bethlehem's student council for three years. The outgoing council had eight members from the Progressive Students and one from Youths.

The highest number of votes given to the Qawasmeh bloc was 461.

In an interview with *Al Mithaq* daily published May 8, Jaradat said his bloc intends to improve academic life for the students by keeping close contacts with the university administration regarding student demands. He also promised to work with the student body to solve problems facing the students that may obstruct their continuing education, either academically or financially.

Bethlehem U. Student Activist Under Town Arrest

The Israeli military governor of Bethlehem placed Jabra Shoumali, president of Bethlehem University Student Council, under his first town arrest beginning May 2. The order is valid for six months.

Shoumali, 22, told *Al Fajr* the town arrest order had restricted him at first to Beit Sahour near Bethlehem. Shoumali said when he discovered that he was supposed to stay in Beit Sahour, which would in practice mean not attending classes at nearby Bethlehem University, he refused to sign the order. Shoumali objected to the Beit Sahour restriction because he said he was a resident of Bethlehem and that his Israeli identity card clearly indicated that. The order was intended to prevent him from attending college by forcing him to live in exile, he said.

On May 3, the Israeli West Bank military government informed Shoumali of a change in the order restricting him now to Bethlehem, until further study by the military into the reasons the Bethlehem area military authorities first decided to restrict him to Beit Sahour. Shoumali returned to classes May 4 pending a final decision from West Bank military headquarters.

Shoumali is a third-year sociology student currently serving his first term as president of the student council. According to his town arrest order, he was accused of "inciting against the security of (Israel)."

Shoumali's school, Bethlehem University, has been of late subjected to increased military intervention in its internal affairs. On April 19, the campus was raided and closed off as a military area for three days. The raid occurred only days before a book exhibit was scheduled to open. Four students were arrested following the raid, including a member of the university student council. The four are still being held in detention without charge at Fara'a prison. Under Israeli military law, detainees can be held without charge for 18 days.

Union Holds 5th Annual Engineers Day

West Bank professional engineers gathered in the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre April 3 to mark the fifth annual Engineers Day organised by their union. The day's events included seminars, a tea party, folk dancing, and book and equipment exhibits on the theme "for supporting Palestinian engineers and developing engineering projects."

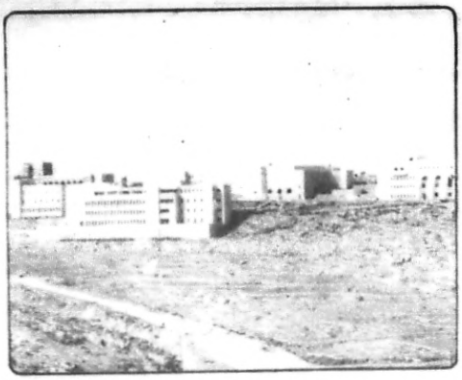
The day began with several speeches delivered by union officials who outlined the role of engineers in the development of the West Bank and problems they face, especially those related to Israeli occupation administration. A message of support was read from the Committee of Engineers in Gaza. Representatives from the Gaza committee were prohibited by Israeli authorities from travelling to the West Bank to attend festivities.

Speakers stressed the important role the union has played in the territories since its establishment in 1970: the establishment of several supervisory and advisory committees to aid local city and village councils in their planning projects; participation in the establishment of engineering schools at Bir Zeit and Najah Universities; and involvement in the technical courses taught at Hebron Polytechnic College. In addition the union has been a forum for the 627 professional engineers in the West Bank, holds seminars and lectures, and sets the professional standards for local engineers.

"Thirty percent of engineers in the West Bank are presently unemployed and the Israeli occupation is to blame," declared union secretary Issam Awad. He argued that the state of economic recession is a direct cause of the tight Israeli control and manipulation of the different sectors of the economy. The recession has discouraged local investment and deprived engineers as well as other professionals of jobs. The union has set aside special funds to aid the unemployed. This includes initiating and co-financing projects, in addition to locating alternative employment in research, production, and maintenance, Awad told the audience of Palestinian engineers and general public.

Jalal Awad, union member and chief organiser of the event, told *Al Fajr* that the day served to educate the public about individual and joint activities of the engineers and the union who "are playing their part in supporting the steadfastness of the Palestinian people against the colonial policies of Israeli occupation." He added that the union recognises the problems facing its members and is doing its utmost to alleviate them, but believes "that their problems will only fade with the end of occupation."

Following the seminars, participants were treated to a folk dance by the Popular Arts Troupe of Ramallah and a play performed by the Sanabel Troupe of Bir Zeit. They also attended an exhibit of the latest science publications and engineering equipment. A special issue of the Arabic lanugage *Engineer* magazine was distributed at the conference.



BZU Reopens New Campus

The new main campus of Bir Zeit University reopened May 8 after a two-month closure ordered by the Israeli military. The closure of the new campus, which contains three of the four university faculties and all administrative offices, extended the previous semester, delayed the second semester, scrambled student and faculty course schedules, and inflicted financial losses on the institution.

Albert Aghazarian, Director of Public Relations, told *Al Fajr* that the present spring term will run into July instead of ending in April and that no student will be allowed to take more than 12 credit hours in the summer term. Aghazarian also said that faculty members and students who had made vacation and reseach plans for the summer months will have to cancel them.

Aghazarian complained bitterly about the Israeli decision to bar building contractors from continuing construction work during the closure. He said that contracts to finish construction within a specified length of time cannot possibly be honoured due to the Israeli ban. The grand opening of the new university library, scheduled for April, has had to be postponed until June, Aghazarian said. He estimated that the financial loss could be in the tens of thousands of dinars. He said that all salaries were paid as usual, whether or not faculty members were actually teaching. Many items the university already posssessed on the closed new campus had to be repurchased, and photocopying costs were enormous.

The new campus of Bir Zeit was closed down February 16 after the Israeli military raided a book exhibit, student council offices, and student dorms. The Israelis said they discovered literature on campus which they termed "illegal."

Haifa U. Enforces Ban on 2 Suspended Students

Haifa University used a court order to enforce its ban on two Arab students, barring them from entering campus or participating in any university activity. The ban prompted a protest demonstration May 8 by about 60 Arab students at the university.

Amir Makhoul, head of the regional union of the Arab Students Committee, and Ja'far Farah were informed by the university administration to stay off campus until the end of their academic suspension period, a punishment imposed following protests on campus against a lecture by former Israeli Chief of Staff (now MK from Tehiya) Rafael Eitan.

The two students, along with four others, were arrested and charged in court April 15 with demonstrating without a permit and destroying university property. The court fined all six after convicting them of the charges. Makhoul and Farah spent more than a month in detention. In addition, Makhoul was suspended by the university for two semesters, ending in February 1986, and Farah for one semester, ending in June of this year.

The administration warned Makhoul and Farah that any attempt to enter campus will be considered a violation of the court order, which gave the university the right "to act in whatever manner it chooses to prevent the two students from crossing its lines."

In response to the new measure, Makhoul and Farah said they would continue their struggle against the university administration until it changes the decisions taken against them.

The Jewish-Arab student movement CAMPUS denounced the university measure and demanded that the university rescind its decision against the two Arab students.

Attacks on Israelis Increase in WB and Gaza

Attacks on Israelis in the occupied West Bank and Gaza increased this week. The Israelis responded with curfews, interrogation roundups, and increased military patrols.

East of the West Bank city of Qalqilya, a homemade roadside bomb was detonated May 6 using a remote control device as an Israeli bus passed on the road. Israel Radio reported that there were no injuries or damages. The radio said bus number 17 was travelling from Petah Tikva, near Tel Aviv, to the Shomron settlements at the eastern entrance to Qalqilya carrying 25 Israelis when the driver noticed a pile of stones on the road. The bus slowed to avoid the stones, the radio explained, and then the explosion went off.

The radio said the bomb consisted of a metal pipe filled with explosives and nails connected to a wire so it could be detonated from a distance of several metres. Israeli soldiers searched the area and found two more Soviet-made grenades. A 24-hour curfew was clamped on east Qalqilya and many local Palestinian residents — 36 from Kufr Saba neighbourhood alone — were rounded up for interrogation. The military also searched Qalqilya homes thoroughly, maltreating occupants and destroying furniture. Qalqilya has a population of 40,000.

The Hebrew daily *Hadashot* reported May 7 that the Qalqilya explosion worried the Israeli government. It said officials fear Lebanese-style resistance is on the rise in the occupied territories.

In Gaza, an Israeli was stabbed May 4 while shopping in the market. The Israeli, Abraham Shourdker, was taken to al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza where he was treated and released. The attacker escaped into the crowd.

According to Shourdker's story, he travelled with a friend from Ashdod to Gaza to buy goods, since prices are cheaper in Gaza. On their way home, they stopped at a gas station. Shourdker stepped out of the car to a nearby shop to buy something, and someone stabbed him in the back and ran away. He was then taken to al-Shifa Hospital, from where he was transported by ambulance to an Israeli hospital in Asqalan.

Reports from Gaza said Palestine Square, where the attack took place, was closed off and shopkeepers in the area were called to the Gaza military headquarters for questioning. The Israeli military also ordered 25 shops in the vicinity of the attack closed until further notice.

Elsewhere in the occupied territories, an Israeli woman was injured May 5 when her car was hit by a stone near al-Am'ari refugee camp, on the outskirts of Ramallah, an Israeli military spokesperson said. A one-day curfew was clamped on the camp, the spokesperson added. Several stone-throwing incidents were also reported May 7 in the occupied territories. Israel Radio reported four incidents in the northern areas. An Israeli bus was stoned near al-Bireh, Ramallah's twin city, as it was travelling from Jerusalem to the Shilo settlement. One of the bus windows was smashed. Another bus was stoned in Nablus and a third near Jalazon refugee camp, north of Ramallah. A fourth bus was stoned in the Qalqilya area. Israel Radio reported no injuries.

In response to the increased stone-throwing incidents, the Israeli military cemented a main entrance to Balata refugee camp near Nablus May 6. An Israeli military spokesperson said the entrance, which leads to the main Nablus road, was closed in retaliation for stone-throwing in that area.

In Nablus, 200 students from M'azouz Masri secondary school were summoned to the city's military headquarters and warned against getting involved in stone-throwing. The students were held for two hours and released.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin toured settlements in the Jordan Valley and the West Bank areas May 7 and expressed support for settlers' demands for security while travelling on the roads. As a result, border guards increased their patrols on West Bank roads, particularly in the Nablus area and in the Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Shu'fat and Nabi Yaqoub. The new Shu'fat-Ma'ale Adumim road has been the site of many recent stone-throwing incidents. An Arab cab driver was murdered on the road two weeks ago. None of the killers, believed to be three Jews, have been found.

JEC Blocks Government Push to Hire Israelis

Jerusalem Electricity Company workers vigourously protest Israeli attempts to take over the company.

The Jerusalem Electricity Company (JEC) rejected an Israeli government suggestion last week that it hire Israeli technicians, arguing that the JEC has sufficient staff and that Israeli officials should not interfere with the Palestinian-run company.

"These matters are entirely the business of the administrative board of the company," the JEC said in a reply letter May 7 to the Israeli Ministry of Energy. The ministry sent a letter May 3 to company officials suggesting that they employ Israelis to work at company generators. The ministry did not specify reasons for the request but asserted, "Our decision is not based on racial or religious considerations but is strictly administrative."

JEC sources told *Al Fajr* that the reason behind the request is the increase in the number of residents in Israeli settlements served by the company: "It appears that they want Israelis to serve Israelis. We reject that, since we do not discriminate between Jewish and Arab customers." Over 35 percent of JEC customers are Israeli settlers.

The JEC insists on supplying electricity to all its concession areas, including settlements. Its concession area covers Jerusalem and the surrounding areas within a 30 kilometre range, except on the Israeli side.

Abed Abu Diab, head of the JEL Employees Union, said in an interview with the Hebrew daily *HaAretz* May 7 that the company hires workers on the basis of job vacancies and the qualifications of applicants. "At this moment the company has 530 employees. We cannot and will not hire more, Israelis or otherwise," he said.

The Dawn
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Teachers' Demands Are Just

Answering a call by the General Committee of Government School Teachers in the West Bank (GCGST), government school teachers in the Nablus and Ramallah districts held a two-hour strike May 7 to protest the month-to-month reduction of their salaries due to the constant decline of the Israeli currency.

Since the 100-day strike in 1980-81 by the 7200 teachers in the West Bank, the GCGST, which formed to lead the strike then and proved worthy of the teachers' trust as their representative, have been directing the teachers' affairs in as concerned and responsible a manner as any union could do. The committee has been closely following the situation of their members, and of teachers in general. Committee members have heard teachers' complaints and conducted studies on cost-of-living conditions related to the declining monthly value of their income.

The teachers' demands are not unrealistic: 100 percent salary increases and reduction of income tax to a maximum of two percent are not exotic. On the contrary, these basic demands, along with demands for health insurance, reasonable maternity leave for women teachers, and family allowances, are the bare minimum necessary for underpaid teachers to face the continuously deteriorating economic situation. Even assuming that these demands are met, the majority of the teachers will be returning to the level of their income as it was five years ago.

Employers in general seldom concern themselves with the living conditions of their employees; their concern is centered instead on their own profits, whether material or moral. Certainly the occupation authorities – as the government school teachers' employer – fall into this category, even if the obvious political interest in suppressing teachers is not to be taken into consideration.

During the last week, workers of a Jerusalem-based daily newspaper faced a similar situation. Their unity and firm stand against their employer ultimately won them victory. The experience gained in the past by the teachers themselves through their own struggle for their rights showed that their unity was essential. The unity of teachers now behind their general committee guarantees them the achievement of their just demands.

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Israel-US Ties Obscure Case for Palestinians

by Merle Thorpe Jr

American misconceptions on the Middle East and the uncritical receptivity of the US to the wishes of Israel and its spokespersons have combined in recent years to complicate and delay peaceful resolution of the tragic Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Americans identify well with Israel, its hopes and fears. This reflects our sympathy for the unspeakable tragedy that befell Jews in World War II and our admiration for the Jewish contribution to Western culture and American society. Americans are less informed, and consequently less sensitive to, the experience and attitudes of Arabs, and in particular the Palestinians. There has been a Western cultural bias against Muslims since the Crusades, and since World War II an effective campaign of anti-Arab stereotyping by supporters of Israel has added to the problem.

Israel was established in a portion of Mandatory Palestine in 1948 after a UN proposal for its partition into a Jewish state and an Arab state failed. Israel captured the remaining portions of the mandated territory, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, from Jordan and Egypt in the 1967 war. The much discussed UN Resolution 242 of 1967, which has served as the basis for all subsequent peace initiatives, called for Israeli withdrawal from territories it captured in return for Arab recognition and peace.

Americans are generally not aware that 90 percent of the inhabitants of Mandatory Palestine in the early 1920s were Palestinian Arabs who sought the self-determination championed by President Woodrow Wilson. In 1948 Palestinian Arabs still constituted 67 percent of the population. In the fighting which led to the establishment of the Jewish state, 600,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled. Their inability to return to their homes left deep scars, reflected in the name they adopted for their experience: "the catastrophe."

After 1967 a growing Arab willingness to negotiate peace with Israel was unfortunately accompanied by a growing Israeli determination to hold the West Bank and Gaza. Despite the provisions of international law requiring the maintenance of the *status quo* during a military occupation, Israel has actively settled these territories and, through questionable legal tactics, has confiscated 41 percent of the land. Restrictions on an additional 11 percent prevent its development by Palestinians.

The 1,400,000 Palestinians residing today in the West Bank and Gaza still constitute 97 percent of the population of these territories. World opinion virtually unanimously favours the territories becoming a Palestinian "homeland" in which Palestinian culture can continue and with which all Palestinians can identify. Yitzhak Shamir's Likud Party favours incorporating the territories into Israel. Shimon Peres' Labour Party favours some territorial compromise with Jordan.

The US has always professed support for UN 242 and the resolution's principle of exchanging land for peace. However, the US has never effectively challenged Israel's West Bank land-taking and settlement activity, which is inconsistent with this principle. Hundreds of millions of US aid dollars have helped to finance the settlements. In a statement made, significantly, after they left office, ex-Presidents Carter and Ford termed Israel's settlements "the major obstacle to peace."

Since 1967 the US has cast 14 solo vetoes in the UN Security Council to protect Israel from censure, many relating to Israel's West Bank settlement and land practices. The effect of these vetoes has been to link the US alone to Israeli policy in the forum of world opinion.

The issue of greatest importance today relates to the recent PLO-Jordanian peace initiative. Once again the US position accommodates Israel rather than reaching for new opportunities to peace. The first provision of the PLO-Jordanian statement calls for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in exchange for "comprehensive peace as established in United Nations and Security Council Resolutions."

President Reagan responded that the US will continue to exclude PLO representatives in any discussions the US might hold, until the PLO "accepts UN 242" and recognises Israel's "right to exist."

The president's position is not constructive for four reasons:

1. By insisting that the PLO adopt the exact language of UN 242, the US ignores the reason why UN 242 is unsatisfactory to Palestinians – it makes no mention of Palestinians or Palestinian national rights, only of a "refugee problem."

2. The US has long wished the PLO to demonstrate its willingness to negotiate peace with Israel. The reason there is a splinter PLO faction today in Damascus opposing Arafat is because Arafat and the mainstream PLO *are* seeking a negotiated settlement.

3. Recognition by and between parties should be a mutual matter. It is the object and, with good fortune, the outcome of negotiation. It is unbalanced to require it of one party and not the other.

4. The PLO is the symbol of Palestinian nationalism and is a necessary party to any Israeli peace. (Some US presidents say the same after leaving office.) The respected member of *The Jerusalem Post* editorial board, Meir Merhav, has stated it best:

How long must it take, how many more wars must we fight, how many lives must be wasted and how crushing must the economic burden become for the realisation to sink in that the PLO, detestable as it may appear to us, is the representative of the Palestinians and holds the power of veto over anything that any Arab state or any group of Palestinians might agree upon in an Arab-Israeli settlement.

The US today has a choice. It can continue a close identification with Israel's policy of not addressing the Palestinian question. If it does, it invites further enmity from among 150,000,000 Arabs and 800,000,000 Muslims. (Israel's policy also jeopardises the fragile Israeli-Egyptian peace, in which the US has invested so heavily.)

Alternatively, the US can be more independent of Israel and by so doing assist Israel to achieve peace. Accepting Merhav's counsel that the PLO is a necessary party to the resolution of the conflict would not be a change in US policy requiring explanation or justification. It would merely be recognition that the mainstream PLO is interested in a negotiated settlement. ■

Merle Thorpe Jr is president of the Foundation for Middle East Peace, Washington, DC.

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

Forgetting Lebanon

A child victim of indiscriminate Israeli shelling in Lebanon is aided by her sister.

by Michael Lowry

Don't talk about it. Don't even mention it in passing. If it crops up in the course of a conversation, wistfully shake your head and say something about it being an unfortunate chapter in the otherwise unblemished history of the state. Repeat the word "quagmire" a few times, throw in a few remarks about "Shi'ite fanaticism" for good measure, and then quickly change the subject. It's your patriotic duty.

The ploy has worked wonders in France (following the Algerian war) and the United States (after Vietnam); there is no reason why it shouldn't do the trick in Israel. After all, social amnesia is a popular pastime. Zionist historiography has established a methodology for forgetting the more unsavoury facts and events in the history of Israel. We must now add the Lebanese war to our list of taboo topics. It's that simple.

If we want to repeat our mistakes — and there seems to be a consensus on that — we must consign their results to oblivion. If we let our "Lebanese experience" wean us from our addiction to military solutions, there is no telling where we could end up.

Needless to say, I would be the last person to argue that the past three years have not been traumatic for both the army and Israeli society at large; but traumas should be repressed, not worked through! Focus too much attention on our "Lebanese debacle" and you may give war a bad name! And we cannot allow that to happen.

Whether or not Begin, Sharon, and Eitan are responsible for the deaths of hundreds of Israeli soldiers (to say nothing of thousands of innocent civilians), no one can accuse them of being Palestinian, and when it comes to assigning guilt, that is our primary criterion.

Fortunately, Prime Minister Shimon Peres has been setting an outstanding example in this regard. When asked if he supported the call to set up a commission of inquiry into the war, he replied in the negative. "I prefer to focus attention on the future," said Peres.

Bravo Mr Prime Minister! Why dredge up the Labour Party's capitulation to the Likud during the first weeks of the war? Why bother informing the public how a "48-hour" war lasted for three years or why a "40-kilometre" incursion turned into a war to create a "new order" in Lebanon? After all, Israel is a democracy. And if the man the Labour Party termed "unfit to hold public office" three years ago is now a senior cabinet minister, it can always be put down to "political realism."

When it comes to remembering what happened during the war, the leveling of the refugee camps, the aerial bombardment of civilian population centres, the Sabra and Shatila massacres, or the al-Ansar prison camp, we should by all means implement a "scorched earth" policy. Remember nothing; sweep everything under the carpet. The economy now has top priority. We must put our shoulder to the grindstone and, in keeping with monetarist ideology, allow the poor to subsidise the industrialists and work for the general aggravation of social misery.

Surely, to rise above one's experience is a sign of maturity. Senility is a godsend. Amnesia is a blessing.

When I snap my fingers you'll wake up and you won't remember a thing... ■

Michael Lowry, a freelance journalist living in Jerusalem, is currently working on a novel about a Martian whose spaceship lands in Kiryat Arba

Neturei Karta Addresses Reagan

The following letter by the Neturei Karta Organisation was given to the American Consul in East Jerusalem for American President Ronald Reagan on May 1 and was forwarded to him by the Consulate. He received this most important controversial document prior to his controversial visit to the German army cemetery in Bitburg, Germany.

The Neturei Karta Jewish Orthodox anti-Zionist organisation is based in Jerusalem and claims to have close to a half million members and adherents throughout the world whose attitude of mind (Jewish theology) views the Zionist state as a sacrilege and as forbidden to exist.

Honourable President Ronald Reagan,

To date, we've refrained from expressing our opinion on a most delicate issue on which many have already volunteered to exhibit their so-called "professional" advice. Since many Jewish religious groups are included with those who have brazenly integrated church and state affairs, we feel obligated to reseparate church and state and place religion in its proper perspective.

Governments decide on policies pertaining to their own well-being, even though it might affect other nations to the contrary. The Jewish people are charged by Divine oath to be loyal to the respective governments under which they find themselves. Dual loyalties (US-Israel) infringe on the fulfillment of this oath. Mr President, your planned visit to West Germany as a guest of Chancellor Helmut Kohl is in the interest of the United States. We are positive that you, as president, do not act in a personal capacity but rather as a representative of the American people, whose interests are your prime concern. We are not leaning either towards the pros or the cons of your intended visit to the Bitburg cemetery, but we are dead certain that you, Mr President, are at least as anti-Nazi as your criticisers and are continuing the precedent set by your predecessors who prevented the Nazi war machine from realising its plans for world conquest.

We decry the opposition of the two-faced Zionist government to your intended visit, when it is common fact that they "used" the Holocaust in order to inherit their "raison d'etre" to establish the Zionist state. Their role in closing the doors of the US, Canada, and England to the Holocaust refugees is documented and their war cry "only through blood will we obtain the (Holy) Land," was made public after their treachery. The best-seller books *Perfidy* and *Min HaMaitzor* attest to the Zionist betrayal of the Jewish people and their alliance to the Nazi demons.

If there is place for criticism of the American government, we would bring it to task for its uncompromising support of a government (Zionist) which is violating the Divine charge to the Jewish people not to force their way back to the Holy Land against the will of those residing there. Your government is sanctioning a state which forged the holy name "Israel" and applied it to its letterhead, notwithstanding the fact that it is not representative of the Jewish people nor of Jewish values. The consequences of such transgression are defined explicity in the Talmud and include those who support such sacrilege. The Zionist state is a passing phenomenon, and one should be realistic in forming one's decisions in regard to it.

We wish you, Mr President, Heavenly Wisdom in reaching all your decisions for the benefit of the American people and all of mankind. May peace be the goal of all governments who were G-d chosen to lead their peoples.

In the name of the seven-man Supreme Neturei Karta Council,

Rabbi Moshe Hirsch
Secretary, Neturei Karta
Jerusalem, Palestine

Boaz Evron wrote this opinion for the Hebrew daily *Yediot Aharanot*. In it he argues that the Israeli public is being deluded about the situation in Lebanon and cites the Israeli reaction to Lebanese youth who appear on TV to discuss their readiness to carry out suicide missions as a case in point.

Psychological Warfare

Israeli troops evacuate Sidon February 18, 1985.

There are times when "psychological warfare" backfires. Following the sensational interview with the young Lebanese *kamikaze*, Sana' Muhedelli, an interview with an adolescent from Balbul who had been sent to southern Lebanon on a suicide mission was screened on Israeli television in an obvious attempt to reduce the shock caused by the first interview.

Rather than allow us to realise exactly who we are dealing with in Lebanon and why the Israeli army is being chased out of there, we are being presented with transparent fairy tale explanations that portray the war being fought against the Israeli army as the work of mixed-up teenagers, or the offspring of needy families who were blackmailed into sacrificing one of their children for a suicide mission. We are thus being prevented from drawing conclusions for the future, coming to grips with the world we live in, and acquiring the type of knowledge necessary to thwart our politicians from leading us down the garden path in the future.

If the whole war is no more than a tempest in a teapot, then why do things look so bleak in southern Lebanon? Why are we hightailing it out of there? If a group of "mixed-up kids" can force the Israeli army to withdraw, what will happen — knock on wood — when Israel confronts a real enemy?

Dr Erdreich, a clinical psychologist and the director of the Rothschild Hospital mental health clinic in Haifa, is in a category of his own. The esteemed doctor consented to be interviewed by the press on Sana' Muhedelli's psychological state of mind. He gave his "professional opinion" after examining her at close range, ie, on a TV screen! "She received psychological reinforcements for the operation," said Dr Erdreich, "after being fed on the 'truth' according to Shi'ite religious leaders. She was in the middle of an adolescent crisis, common during the transition from childhood to adulthood. Such a state can be exploited by charismatic figures, who can even convince people to give up their lives. This is done by laying great stress on the afterlife. This young woman was brainwashed and manipulated by Shi'ite preachers who promised her a glorious life in the world to come." The good doctor went on to recommend the launching of a "psychological counter-offensive" directed at Lebanese youth who, "because of their naivete, often fall victim to the lies of local preachers..."

Now, the first thing that strikes you about the learned doctor's assessment is he didn't even hear what the young woman said. All of us heard Ehud Ya'ari's [Israel TV's "Arab affairs" commentator] introductory remarks. He said that Sana' Muhedelli belonged to an extremist organisation that was *secular*. Moreover, she didn't say a single word about religion or the afterlife in the course of the interview. How the doctor decided she had been brainwashed by Shi'ite religious extremists is thus a total mystery. Perhaps he has his own sources of information. Then again, perhaps Sana' Muhedelli wasn't a Shi'ite. That point wasn't really made clear.

I hope Dr Erdreich pays more attention to what his patients tell him, because about the only thing his three-penny "psychological assessment" reveals is that *he has been brainwashed* — by the army and the media. He simply did not listen to what the young woman said. His "professional opinion" was entirely based on what he thought he heard, or what he expected to hear, but as far as what she did say, well, he simply ignored that.

> WE ARE BEING PRESENTED WITH TRANSPARENT FAIRY TALE EXPLANATIONS.

She was quite forthright about her beliefs; she said that she was fighting for the liberation of her country and her people from foreign occupation. We once fought a similar battle, and many other nations have done the same. Those of *us* who sacrificed their lives were and are praised by one and all for their heroism and idealism. Right now in Lebanon there's a war on, and it can't be put down to "brainwashing by religious preachers." There's a war on and that's why the Israeli army is retreating. And if the doctor would have read a bit outside his discipline, he would have quickly discovered what *our* combatants were willing to do for the sake of their country, whether in the underground or in the army. Take Dov Grunner for instance; he preferred the gallows to a British pardon.

I suppose the good doctor never read about the Soviet soldiers, the simple peasants who strapped explosives to their bodies and threw themselves under German tanks... In any case, psychology alone is not capable of answering all the questions about human motivation. One must realise that humans are also political animals, spiritual animals, and, at times, evil animals.

I have not singled out Dr Erdreich's sorry excuse of a "psychological assessment" in order to attack the doctor's person. (Everyone talks nonsense once in a while.) My real objective is to draw attention to how an enlightened man, a professional trained to listen to other people and try to understand what he is being told, could so misjudge a situation... But if even he is incapable of listening, preferring to parot what he has read in the press, what can one expect from the simple man in the street who desperately wants to assuage his fears and has no desire to look the facts in the face? And if we are too frightened to accept the facts, how will we be able to prevent future debacles and catastrophes? Perhaps it's just a matter of time before someone comes along who is convinced that with the help of a "sophisticated psychological offensive" and with the aid of "specialists," we will be able to remain in the security belt on the Lebanese border. And our boys may be forced to pay for such nonsense with their lives.

Reserve General Uri Ben-Ari put things in their proper perspective in an article he wrote in *HaAretz* last month: We are fighting against a population engaged in a guerrilla war, a war of liberation. If we want to remain in Lebanon (though nobody understands what for) we will have to wage a cruel and bloody war, a war that will not stop short of slaughter and the transformation of certain areas into wasteland. But since we are not prepared for such a campaign, we shouldn't waste any more time in Lebanon. We should withdraw as soon as possible. (Translation: Yediot Aharanot, Friday Supplement, April 19, 1985) ■

Sana' Muhedelli

Apology

We refer to an article published on June 15, 1984, under the heading "The Armenian Church and Community Politics." We have now ascertained that some points in the said article referring to Archbishop Shahe Ajamian apparently were based on incorrect information supplied to us by third parties and we extend our apology to his Eminence for any unpleasantness that may have been caused thereby.

Al Fajr

Tampering with Municipalities in the OT's

A Major Black Spot on Israel's Record

by Daoud Kuttab

This April marks the third anniversary of the dismissal of most West Bank and Gaza mayors and municipalities and their replacement by Israeli appointees. Municipal elections have not been held in the West Bank since 1976 and in the Gaza Strip since 1967.

The Israelis have tried hard to find local residents whom they could appoint to replace the nationalist mayors but they were only able to do so in Jenin and Qalqilya, where members of the collaborationist Village Leagues were promoted. Most of other West Bank cities are run by lone Israeli mayors without local councils.

The death of prominent nationalist Mayor Karim Khalaf of Ramallah last month and the potential for change in the *status quo* brought on by a new Jordanian government has encouraged the Israeli authorities to intensify efforts to resolve the "problem" of the municipalities.

Legal Status

In the West Bank, the status of the municipalities is specified by Jordanian Law No. 29 for the year 1955. The Jordanian law sets the term of the municipalities at four years. Jordanian law also provides a legal remedy for cases in which the mayor is dismissed or the council dissolved. Law No. 29 stipulates that if the municipal council is dissolved, the authorities must also set a date for new elections. Another Jordanian law, No. 5, made in 1963, specifies that the time between the council's dismissal and new elections must not exceed one year from the date of the council's dissolution.

Israeli violations of the municipal law actually began shortly after they occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. The Jerusalem municipality was the first to be dissolved when Israel annexed East Jerusalem and imposed Israeli law on the Arab city. Hence the Jerusalem district was abolished and Rawhi Khatib, the district commissioner, was deported in November 1967. For the rest of the West Bank, the Israeli military authorities issued Military Order No. 80 on August 2, 1967, which stated that local bodies continue in their services despite all local laws or until another military order to the contrary is issued. The Israeli attempts to interfere with the existing municipal norms occurred again on April 8, 1980. Military Order No. 830 extended the terms of the municipalities indefinitely.

The most flagrant violations occurred in March 1982, when the Israeli military administration dismissed the elected municipal council of al-Bireh. This was followed shortly thereafter with the dismissal of Mayors Karim Khalaf and Bassam Shaka'a of Ramallah and Nablus. The mayors of Jenin, Qalqilya, Gaza, and Hebron were ousted during the next year.

In a new publication entitled *The Legal Status of the Municipalities Under the Civil Administration*, Hebron attorney Ala'addin Bakri strongly criticised the Israeli moves. Bakri's legal challenge addresses the dissolution of the council of al-Bireh. He argues that it is illegal for the Israeli military to legislate laws in an occupied area; therefore Military Order No. 947 — which set up the controversial "civil administration" — is illegal. (It was the Palestinians' refusal to deal with the civil administration that served as the pretext for the dismissal of municipalities and mayors.) Bakri argues that the "head of the civil administration doesn't have the right to legislate new laws and was not empowered to enforce the Jordanian municipal law." The Palestinian lawyer also finds fault in the order to dissolve the council because it did not set a date for new elections, as specified by Jordanian law, and because the period after dismissal was not limited to one year.

Regarding the Israelis appointed to replace the dismissed Palestinian mayors, Bakri says that section 39 of Jordanian law specifies that the mayor must be a resident of the city, his name must appear on the voters list, and he must have paid municipal taxes, none of which apply to the Israeli-appointed mayors.

Appointments

Installing Israeli mayors was not the Israelis' ultimate goal. Immediately after dismissing the elected officials, the military authorities began searching for local residents who would do their bidding to take over the municipalities. Except for Jenin and Qalqilya, they were unable to convince Palestinians to replace their own elected mayors and councils under Israeli auspices. First they tried to recruit Village Leaguers and other individuals who were cooperating closely with the civil administration. When that approach failed, they contacted pro-Jordanians and even, in certain places, elected members of the deposed councils. In Jenin and Qalqilya the appointees who replaced the elected mayors were members of the Israeli sponsored Village Leagues. Shihab al-Sanori was asked to run the municipality in Jenin and Abd al-Rahman Abu Sneineh, another Village Leaguer, was given the nod to Qalqilya. Sanori, however, did not last long. He took revenge against his personal enemies by cutting their electric and water supplies, actions which quickly aroused international attention. After the BBC reported on his tactics, the Israelis removed him and replaced him with another supporter, Abdullah Hlouh. A five-man council of the heads of local government schools, health facilities, and the post office was appointed to assist him in running municipal affairs.

In Gaza, where no municipal elections have been held since 1967, the dismissed Mayor Rashad Shawwa — himself an Israeli appointee — was replaced by a government employee, Hamzeh Turkmani. Unlike the West Bank, the Gaza Strip does not have a clear legal provision regarding elections. Under Egyptian rule between 1948 and 1967, the Strip was considered part of Palestine and the government refused to apply Egyptian law to the area. Existing Turkish and British mandatory laws remained in force on the Gaza Strip, as the Egyptians considered themselves temporary administrators of the Strip while waiting for a resolution to the Palestinian problem. The existing law did not provide for municipal elections like the West Bank. When the Israelis occupied the Gaza Strip in 1967, they carried over the existing legal infrastructure.

Jordanian Option

Having failed to find anyone who was willing to run the major municipalities of Nablus, Hebron, Ramallah, and al-Bireh, the Israelis turned to pro-Jordanian figures. They tried to exploit the *hamula*, or extended family, for their appointments. For example, they contacted members of the Ja'abari family in Hebron, the Kana'an family in Nablus, former Ramallah Mayor Nadim Zarou, and members of the Tawil family in al-Bireh. The aim was to keep the elected nationalist mayors out of office and to return to a feudal family system which would facilitate Israeli control over city residents. During the discussions, the traditional family heads — all of whom have strong ties with Jordan — asked permission to consult Amman before agreeing to serve in any post. At one point, the Jordanians appeared to have made a deal with the Israelis on the municipalities. Basel Kana'an, a member of the Nablus council, was offered the post of running the Nablus council. According to *Al Fajr* sources in Nablus, Jordan told him to accept the post and also approved similar arrangements for the rest of the municipalities where Israeli-appointed mayors ruled. But the deal fell through because the Israelis refused to alter the *status quo* in cities where they had succeeded in appointing Arab mayors (ie, Jenin and Qalqilya). Jordan has tried to pressure the appointed councils in Jenin and Qalqilya. *Al Fajr* has heard unconfirmed reports from Jenin that the Jordanian government headed by Zaid Rifa'i is planning to cut off the salaries of any government employee who currently serves on an appointed council. These unconfirmed reports also assert that the Jordanian authorities may withdraw passports of individuals who continue to hold these appointed positions.

When the Basel Kana'an deal fell through, the Israelis were back to square one in their search for new formulas to extricate them from the mess in which they found themselves. Karim Khalaf's sudden death March 30 provided a new opening for the Israelis. On Israel TV's Hebrew news report the day of Khalaf's funeral, the reporter termed Khalaf's death "another nail in the coffin of the National Guidance Committee."

Two weeks after Khalaf's death, the Israeli military governor of Ramallah summoned the municipal council for discussions. Council members were reportedly disgusted by the way the Israelis tried to take advantage of Khalaf's death. According to Ramallah's deputy mayor Reverend Odeh Rantisi, the Israelis offered to reinstate the municipality under the present Israeli mayor, Maurice Biton, for three months, after which one of the Arab council members would take over. The municipal council flatly rejected the offer, saying that the reason for their walkout — the civil administration — remains unchanged. Council members told Israeli military officials that they will not accept any deal that doesn't resolve the ambiguous status of all West Bank municipalities.

The Israeli attempt to solve the municipal problem is rooted in both political and financial considerations. Since the national unity government was formed under Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Israeli officials have been talking about improving the quality of life in the West Bank. The municipalities stand out as a major black spot on Israel's record because of the wide-scale dismissals of elected Arab mayors and their replacement by Israelis and Israeli appointees. US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy erroneously told the US Congress recently that "elected West Bank mayors will soon replace the Israeli officers presently running the municipalities." Murphy's statement — whether intentional or not — was meant to convince American legislators to increase US aid to Israel because it is indeed improving the quality of life in the occupied territories.

The question of the municipalities is also a factor in Israel's relations with Egypt. The Egyptian government has set improvement of the situation in the occupied territories as a pre-condition for improving relations with Israel.

Financially, the Israeli-run municipalities do not receive the financial support from Arab countries, specifically Jordan, that the previous elected municipalities enjoyed. The Israelis have not allocated any of the military's budget for the cities but have instead had to raise taxes and fees charged to local merchants and residents. The move deepened local resentment against the Israeli presence as it came to represent not only national and political occupation but has also contributed to financial loss and economic deprivation.

Despite their interest in finding puppet Arab mayors, the Israelis enjoy a number of advantages from the *status quo*. Their experience with municipal elections in the occupied territories has made Israeli military and political officials extremely averse to a repeat performance. The spokesperson for the civil administration bluntly told *Al Fajr* that "the present policy is against holding any kind of elections." Military officials have repeatedly conceded that allowing elections in 1976 was a grave mistake. At that time, nationalist blocs won most of the municipal councils. West Bank observers are certain that new elections would put in office more radical nationalist figures than those elected in 1976. As more young Palestinians reach the legal voting age, any general municipal election would most certainly bring newer and younger leaders supportive of the PLO and vehemently opposed to the continuation of Israeli occupation.

The Israeli takeover of West Bank cities has also given them control over a number of local institutions. They have been able to accelerate dependence on Israeli institutions for electric and water supplies, for example. Since 1982 the Jenin district has been connected to the Israeli electric grid, as have several sectors of the Nablus district. The Nablus Electricity Company, which elected Mayor Bassam Shaka'a struggled so hard to build, is slowly deteriorating as spare parts are withheld and engineering experts kept away by the current Israeli mayor. Nablus residents also feel that the high electricity rates are a means to pressure them to demand linkage with the Israeli electric grid.

In Hebron, the Israelis had much more to gain by deposing the mayor. Shortly after taking office in 1983, the Israeli mayor, Zamir Shemesh, cancelled a number of legal petitions filed by the Arab municipality against Jewish settlers. Shemesh, who has been the Custodian of Absentee Property in Hebron since 1968, made a number of changes in favour of the settlers. Elected-and-deposed acting Mayor Mustafa Natshe explained that since the establishment of the Kiryat Arba settlement in 1968 the municipality had billed the entire settlement for electricity in the name of the Hebron military governor. Now, says Natshe, every Jewish settler in the Hebron area receives an electricity bill in his name from the municipality.

Natshe also described the Israeli mayor's role in moving the bus station and the vegetable market out of the centre of town to make room for the settlers to expand their presence in the city centre. Natshe says that the present municipality has drawn up engineering plans and is pursuing the transfer of the bus station, which was the centre of a legal suit between the Islamic *waqf* and the municipal council on one hand, and the settlers and the military governor on the other. The Israeli mayor Shemesh cancelled the suit on his first day in office.

Politics

The role of the municipalities has been a major source of dispute between the occupied territories residents and the Israelis since the 1976 elections. Palestinians under occupation are united in their insistence that municipalities should have jurisdiction over their daily economic and social needs as well as their political aspirations. The Israelis want municipalities to deal only with non-political, basic services like sewage, street cleaning, and garbage disposal. But even very basic services can have political implications. Is it too much to demand one's own electric company? To ask for wider city limits? To protect the citizens' land and property from confiscation or settler takeover? Is it politics to demand that a curfew on the city be lifted, or that a prisoner be released, or that closed shops and universities be opened? It is politics to defend residents' basic human rights and to protest changes in the laws that affect those rights?

To ask Palestinian council members to refrain from political activity is tantamount to telling them not to breathe. ■

Hebron municipality headquarters, where the Israeli appointee Zamir Shemesh oversees affairs for the city's Arab population.

Municipality Scorecard

CITY	1976 ELECTION RESULTS	STATUS OF ELECTED MAYOR	PRESENT MAYOR	POPULATION	COUNCIL
Nablus	Bassam Shaka'a	Expelled in 1982.	Jaber Hinno (Israeli)	75,000	Council froze in protest of Shaka'a dismissal
Hebron	Fahd Qawasmeh	Deported in 1980. Killed in 1984. Deputy Mustafa Natshe expelled in 1983.	Zamir Shemesh (Israeli)	70,000	Dissolved in 1983.
Ramallah	Karim Khalaf	Expelled in 1982.	Maurice Biton (Israeli)	25,000	Council froze in protest of Khalaf's dismissal.
Al-Bireh	Ibrahim Tawil	Dismissed in March 1982.	Gim-Lailyalious (Israeli)	25,000	Dissolved in March 1982.
Bethlehem	Elias Freij	Unchanged	Unchanged	15,000	Deputy Mayor George Hazboun fired by council in September 1982.
Halhoul	Mohammed Milhem	Deported in 1980.	Hijazi Madieh (deputy)	15,000	Still in office except for Milhem.
Jenin	Ahmad Shawqi Mahmoud	Expelled in 1982.	Abdullah Hlouh (appointed)	40,000	5 members (Israeli-appointed).
Jericho	Abd al-Aziz Sweiti	Died of natural causes.	Jamil Khalaf (appointed)	15,000	7 out of original 9 in office.
Anabta	Wahid Hamdallah	Expelled in 1982 on charges of violating town arrest.	No Mayor	15,000	Frozen in protest.
Beit Sahour	Hanna Atrash	Unchanged	Unchanged	15,000	Unchanged
Beit Jala	Bishara Daoud	Expelled by the Israelis for slapping a soldier.	Farrah Araj (appointed)	10,000	Unchanged except for Bishara Daoud.
Beitunia	Ahmad Lutfi Othman	Unchanged	Unchanged	10,000	Unchanged
Dura	Mohammed Mousa Amro	Expelled in 1982.	Abd al-Fattah Dudein (Appt.)	15,000	Council dissolved.
Silwad	Mousa Mohammed Mousa	Unchanged	Unchanged	9,000	Unchanged
Salfit	Hassan al-Zierr	Unchanged	Unchanged	6,000	Unchanged
Tobas	Hashem Saleh	Unchanged	Unchanged	18,000	Unchanged
Yatta	Ahmad Abu Qbita	Election results challenged.	Abd al-Rahman Hijeh (Israeli-appointed — a resident of nearby Dura).	12,000	3 members (Israeli-appointed).
Tulkarm	Hilmi Hanoun	Unchanged	Unchanged	30,000	Unchanged
Bir Zeit	Amin Shehadeh	Died of natural causes.	Ibrahim Awadalah (deputy)	10,000	8 out of 9 still in office.
Deir Dibwan	Hijazi Rashid	Expelled in 1982	Salim Sabah (Appointed)	7,000	3 member council appointed
Bani Zeid	Yehya Rimawi	Unchanged	Unchanged	10,000	Unchanged
Qalqilya	Amin Nasr	Expelled in 1982.	Abd al-Rahman Abu Sneineh (appointed)	40,000	Council dismissed. 3 members appointed
Ya'abad	Mirweh Anis Qasem	Unchanged	Unchanged	10,000	Unchanged
Arrabeh	Abd al-Fattah Ardah	Died of natural causes.			
Qabatya	Mohammed Awad	Expelled in 1982	Zahran Hasoneh (appointed)	13,000	
Gaza City	Rashad Shawwa *	Expelled in May 1982.	Hamzeh Ti :mani (Appt)	120,000	Council dismissed
Khan Younis	Suleiman Astal *	Unchanged	Unchanged	60,000	Unchanged
Rafah	Suleiman Zo'rob *	Arrested in 1984 on charges of drug smuggling.	Jamal Bal'awi	50,000	Unchanged

* No elections took place in Gaza Strip

Residents of Anabta, near Jerusalem, participate in a demonstration against land expropriation outside the municipality headquarters.

Israeli Soldiers in Lebanon

Below are a selection of views from Israeli papers and soldiers on the psychological impact of implementing the "iron fist" policy on the ground in Lebanon.

Q: How does one capture a terrorist?

A: Actually, it's quite simple. You shoot him. If you hit him, he's a terrorist; if you miss, he's an innocent civilian. (Translation: by B. Micha'el, HaAretz Supplement, March 22, 1985)

The Army's 'Iron Fist' Policy

A young officer was briefing a group of soldiers prior to their entry into a Shi'ite village. "I want to make it absolutely clear," said the officer, "that my orders are to shoot anything that moves."

In one short sentence, he summed up the gist of the army's "iron fist" policy: shoot anything that moves. Three year after having entered Lebanon the Israeli army has been... transformed from an army of national defence to an army that can hardly defend itself. Whereas in the past soldiers knew that if forced to kill, they would be doing it for the sake of their homeland, the conditions prevailing in Lebanon at present have rendered such an approach a thing of the past.

The army's "iron fist" policy is generating a dangerous dynamic. The rise in the number of searches and arrests carried out by the army in Shi'ite villages serves only to escalate the number of attacks waged against the soldiers. As casualties mount, the soldiers on the ground have become more inclined to justify the "iron fist" policy. At the same time, soldiers who have participated in round-ups have been very vociferous in complaining about the unease and psychological difficulties they experience when ordered to interrogate prisoners in village squares, break into homes (where they usually find the women and children of the house in hysteria), or shoot at escaping cars.

And so they shoot and weep and the inevitable result is a callousness that augurs a "moral debacle."

Many combat officers in Lebanon told me of how they were shocked to hear soldiers [from the standing army] complain about how their officers restrained them from using force against the Shi'ites. Many soldiers believe that the problem can be solved by a massive show of force against the Shi'ite villages. They should be taught a lesson, they say, so that they realise whom they're dealing with. The problem is that we are being prevented from taking steps in this direction. (Translation: by Reuven Feldhauser, HaAretz, March 31, 1985)

Soldiers' Talk (Part One)

Q: "What do you think of the "iron fist" policy?"

Yaron: "....You sit there in an outpost getting shot at continually and you end up losing any kind of balanced view of what's going on. You hear the people around you using all kinds of expressions that they would never dare think about, let alone express, in Israel."

Q: "Like what?"

Yaron: "Like, 'okay, let's go into the village and obliterate the place...' I haven't been here for long, but it's a steady process. It has an effect on you. I wouldn't say that we were getting blood thirsty — that's an exaggeration. But when you hear that a buddy of yours has been injured, it's hard not to feel that way."

Steven: "When I arrived in Lebanon, I would hesitate for a moment before pulling the trigger, even if I knew that I was face-to-face with the enemy. Now, I no longer hesitate. That's what being here does to you. I think that we have lost human feelings we may have once had. We can't go on like this."

Baruch: "If you're in the jungle, you behave like an animal. War is war. If we were to behave any differently, we'd get screwed."

A member of a Red Cross relief team covers the lifeless bodies of victims in the Israeli "revenge" raid on Zrariyeh in March. Israeli tanks drove over the top of cars, smashing them and their drivers inside, in revenge for an attack on an Israeli troop convoy in Lebanon the day before.

Yaron: "There's a village up on top of a hill a little ways from here; they'd been shooting at us and yesterday we entered the village. On our way in, one guy said: 'What we ought to do is blow this place to hell.' Another guy responded by saying that there are women and children here..."

Danny: "If I were a commander and had to give an order to shell a village, I would hesitate. But now, when I get an order, I carry it out, even if it's problematic for me." (Translation: by Edna Pe'er, Yediot Aharanot, March 22, 1985)

The New Generation

The generation of soldiers inducted into the army during the war... have internalised the Lebanese norms of combat. First of all, they are totally contemptuous about the value of human life, human feelings, and property. An indication of how deep-rooted this phenomenon has become can be taken by the fact that soldiers from the standing army shoot their way through villages, aiming their weapons above the heads of the women and children in the streets. (I have been told by paratroopers from the reserve army that there are never any men visible during Israeli patrols: "If they haven't gone into hiding, they've fled to Beirut.") There have been incidents in which soldiers shot up cars for no reason...

Every recruit is inculcated with the idea with everyone in Lebanon is a potential enemy. They're recruited into the army at 18 and a lot of things are still very nebulous for them. But there they are, in a country where terrorism reigns supreme. Little wonder that they find it difficult to differentiate between civilians and enemy combatants. The result is that each and every Lebanese person automatically becomes "the enemy."

"Everyone is fighting against you and you're fighting against all of them." That is the first building block of an outlook that runs counter to military norms. Worse yet, it can be positively destructive.

What happens on the ground? They shoot all the time, in keeping with the notion that "whoever takes his finger off the trigger is a goner." (Translation: by Eitan Haber, Yediot Aharanot, March 22, 1985)

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"In southern Lebanon the Israeli army has become totally helpless. Every explosive device and every RPG rocket eats away at my soldiers' military code of ethics. The 'iron fist' policy has provided them with a valve for releasing their pent-up frustrations. When we comb a Shi'ite village, I can't help thinking of what happened in Mai Lai. I pray it doesn't happen here, but after three years of being in Lebanon, I'm not all that sure that my prayers will help." (Translation: An Israeli army officer, quoted in an article by Reuven Feldhauser, HaAretz, March 31, 1985)

Soldiers' Talk (Part Two)

Meir: "Nobody talks about the 'Peace of the Galilee' anymore. Everyone is too embarassed to even mention it. The only thing on our minds is how to avoid getting hit. When we returned [from Zrariyeh], we heard that a soldier had gotten knocked off on his way home. It was an explosive device this time. So what good is this whole bloody thing doing us?"

Erez: "When we returned from the village, we just flopped on our beds. At nine that night an RPG went flying over the outpost. They say we're taking 'preventative action' but it doesn't seem to be working. Anyway, half the guys didn't even bother getting up. Nothing new in being on the receiving end of an RPG attack. Some of us went outside and fired a few rounds in the direction from which the rocket must have been fired. Then we went back to sleep, counting ourselves lucky that no one had been hit. If someone would have been injured, the whole thing would have started up again. It's a vicious circle and it doesn't stop for a second."

Q: "What did you do [in Zrariyeh]?"

Erez: "We went in at dawn. There was some shooting and a few bombs went off. We went from house to house looking for weapons and suspects. We'd surround a given house and then enter. We'd go through the cupboards, pull up the carpets, and examine every centimetre."

Q: "What kind of instructions did you get?"

Erez: "To shoot people trying to escape, to round up those found hiding and bring them to the village square for an interrogation, and not to take anything; no looting. Also we were told to be polite to the women and children."

Shimon: "If we're here already, we have no choice but to do this kind of thing... Everyday another friend of ours gets killed. The guys here no longer talk about it. They keep it all locked up inside. And that's the way it is. One day you find yourself entering a village and you feel that you want to destroy everything in your path. Look, every 12-year-old kid here puts me on edge. I no longer trust anybody. It's as though I've become a machine.

"I want to get home in one piece, at least for my parents' sake. I'm not really even doing any fighting here. All I do is clear people out of their homes. Is that what I enlisted in the paratroopers for?"

Erez: "You enter a home and there's a woman crying and a bunch of kids bawling away, and you go in and you imagine to yourself that it's your mother standing there and those kids are your brothers and sisters. So you stop for a second, but the next minute your buddy discovers an arms cache and you know that one of your friends was perhaps killed by those very same arms. So the blood goes to your head and you feel overwhelmed by violent emotions — which you try to get under control; however, you're not always successful. You're always looking for an outlet for the tension you feel, so you go over the place; I mean, you take it apart, going over everything with a fine tooth comb. And you don't show any consideration for the people in the house. Or else when you've taken a terrorist prisoner and you're disarming him, you give vent to all the pent-up feelings of tension you've been walking around with..."

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"The Story of the Eye and the Tooth"

The Plot Narrows: Hakawati Adapts to Audience Demand

by Said al-Ghazali

The latest El-Hakawati play, *The Story of the Eye and the Tooth*, shown at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre in East Jerusalem in March and April, created the most controversy of all of Hakawati's six plays. The play, with its common theme of war and conflict, was strongly attacked by members of a politically-oriented audience wishing to understand a clear-cut political message rather than view the often murky action of modern theatre. Some viewers with little or no experience with norms in 20th century theatre come to El-Hakawati's auditorium expecting to see an understandable play with clear and direct references to the current political situation. This expectation, with which Hakawati has had to live since 1977, forced the troupe this time to introduce, after a few shows, changes in the play which altered the theme, making it directly related to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The first and second versions of *The Story of the Eye and the Tooth* were presented in two separate parts: the first scene at the pool and the second scene of war. In the first part of the original version, we are introduced to the social custom of a village with residents celebrating the happy occasions of marriage and childbirth. The people are happy, with no grave problems. What trivial conflicts arise before the wedding are successfully solved.

In the first scene four pregnant women — Um Ata, Um Jaber, Um Abbas, and a Beduin — appear at the village spring where they give birth to two daughters and two sons. After 15 years, the families of the two boys and two girls arrange their marriage. The double wedding ceremony is interrupted by a trivial matter and the father of the two girls argues with the father of the two boys. An intermediator then forces the two families to solve their problems and the double wedding takes place.

The second part of the original version begins after 40 years. We are introduced to the two main characters, the two boys now men — Abu Rustum and Abu Yousef — and their wives, Afifeh and Leli. The families of the two brothers Abu Rustum and Abu Yousef are now at war. In the introductory scene to part two, the causes of the war are not clear, however. "Perhaps it is caused by a land dispute or a trivial reason," says the narrator. For whatever reason, a war between the two families breaks out. It is very furious and repetitive. Both parties appear at equal strength. The stage is full of explosions and smoke. There is no end to the war despite the attempts at reconciliation made by both families.

Abu Rustum is shown as an awesome, magnificent leader with great spiritual strength. Though he is poor, he prepares for a revolution which will restore happiness to the people of his country. On the contrary, Abu Yousef is shown as a leader who cares only about his materialistic interests and considers his brother an archenemy and rebel. Both Abu Rustum and Abu Yousef attempt to mobilise several lifeless dummies thrown in the centre of the stage.

At the climax of the battle, Tanza'a, the son of Abu Rustum, and Sara, the daughter of Abu Yousef, meet in the battlefield and fall in love. They decide to get married. Both Abu Rustum and Abu Yousef refuse to bless the marriage. At the wedding party Abu Yousef kills his nephew, the bridegroom Tanza'a, and everyone — including Abu Rustum, Abu Yousef, their followers Owath and Abram, and their wives Leli and Afifeh — fall dead on top of the lifeless dummies. The dawn's light focuses on Tanza'a and Sara, which suggests a brighter future.

In the second version of Hakawati's story, the play's frame of two parts remains the same. However, the content of the play is changed. In the first section the character of Rahel, a Palestinian Jewess, is among the women at the pool. She carries her son Abram, who falls into the pool. All the women rush to rescue him. Rahel is very much a part of village life, actively participating in a village wedding. The same trivial wedding dispute is solved and the marriage ceremony enacted.

A *dabkeh* scene is then introduced in between the two sections where we see actors and actresses dancing the traditional *dabkeh* dance. Suddenly we hear a voice addressing the "land of promise." It is Yousef Salameh or Yosef Ben Shlomo. "This is the land of our ancestors. This is the land of milk and honey," he says. Yosef Ben Shlomo, who wears Western clothes, then draws his pistol and fires at the dancers. The dancers' movement gradually becomes slower and one by one they fall on the ground, transformed into silent lifeless figures. Ben Shlomo then sings a song of peace.

The second section begins with the mixed music of war, of funeral marches, and of weddings. The narrator then explains that the war has broken out because the newcomer put his foot on the land.

The story then follows the previous order of the first version. The wedding between Sara and Tanza'a is celebrated. But Abu Rustum and Yosef Ben Shlomo get involved in a raging fight, and Tanza'a is killed by Ben Shlomo. There the play ends.

The changes made in the play were to clarify and simplify its theme so as to specifically relate it to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict. The introduction of Rahel, the Palestinian Jewess, in the second version refers to the peaceful history of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine in the past. The scene at the pool suggests that there was mutual coexistence between Arabs and Jews who practised the same culture.

By changing the name of Abu Yousef to Yosef Ben Shlomo, Hakawati has clarified that this character should be seen as a Zionist leader. The way he is lowered from the ceiling by a rope suggests that he is an outsider, a Westerner in Western clothing. Abu Yousef in the first version was not an outsider, but Abu Rustum's brother. Their mother was Um Jaber in the first act at the pool. The *dabkeh* scene is added to connect the two sections of the play and to clarify the reasons behind the war. Yosef Ben Shlomo's address to the land of promise reminds the audience of the Zionist movement's propaganda aiming at mobilising Jews in Palestine.

The vague reasons behind the war are clarified in the second version. The narrator changes his general comments about a fight between brothers into a specific reference to a political conflict. "The earlier welfare and happy life have disappeared since the stranger Yosef Ben Shlomo and his followers have put their feet on this land," he says. "His coming is akin to an earthquake or a volcano in the midst of a wedding."

In the first version, the lifeless dummies were brought to the stage centre by the beginning of the second section. The disconcerting, mixed music of war, funeral, and wedding along with the scene of the lifeless statues helped to transport the audience from the wedding to the war. The means used to achieve this transfer in the second version was less artistic. The scene of Yosef Ben Shlomo firing at *dabkeh* dancers seems very naive and too direct. The song of peace deepens this sense of naivete.

It is easy in the second version to identify the characters as belonging to two main parties. There are Abu Rustum and his followers: his wife Afifeh, his son Tanza'a, and his faithful soldier Owath. There are also Yosef Ben Shlomo and his followers: his wife Leli, his dauther Sara, and his faithful soldier Abram. The first group obviously represents the Palestinians, and the second the Israelis. The conflict between these two groups is clearly a national one. But in the first version, the conflict between the two brothers and their followers was vague and could have easily been interpreted as class conflict, since one brother was wealthy and the other poor. It is also easy in the second version to identify the members of the two nations by their clothes and personal belongings.

In the second version the war is less furious and cosmic. There was more stress on the conflict itself than on war in general and its terrible consequences. In his speech to his followers, Abu Rustum's remarks are made more clear in the second version than in the first one. He addresses his people: "You, what are you doing? Why do you stand still? Do you lack oil, do you lack civilisation? You have abandoned me. But wait. Your day will come." This is very clearly a reference to the war in Lebanon and how the Arab nations did nothing to help the Palestinians. In the first version, however, Abu Rustum uses his speech to call in general for revolution while in the second version he uses it to warn the Arab countries.

The war between the two families in the first version was between equal rivals, while in the second, Abu Rustum and his followers are shown as weakened refugees wanting to return to their own country.

The changes made in the play have limited the theme's interpretation

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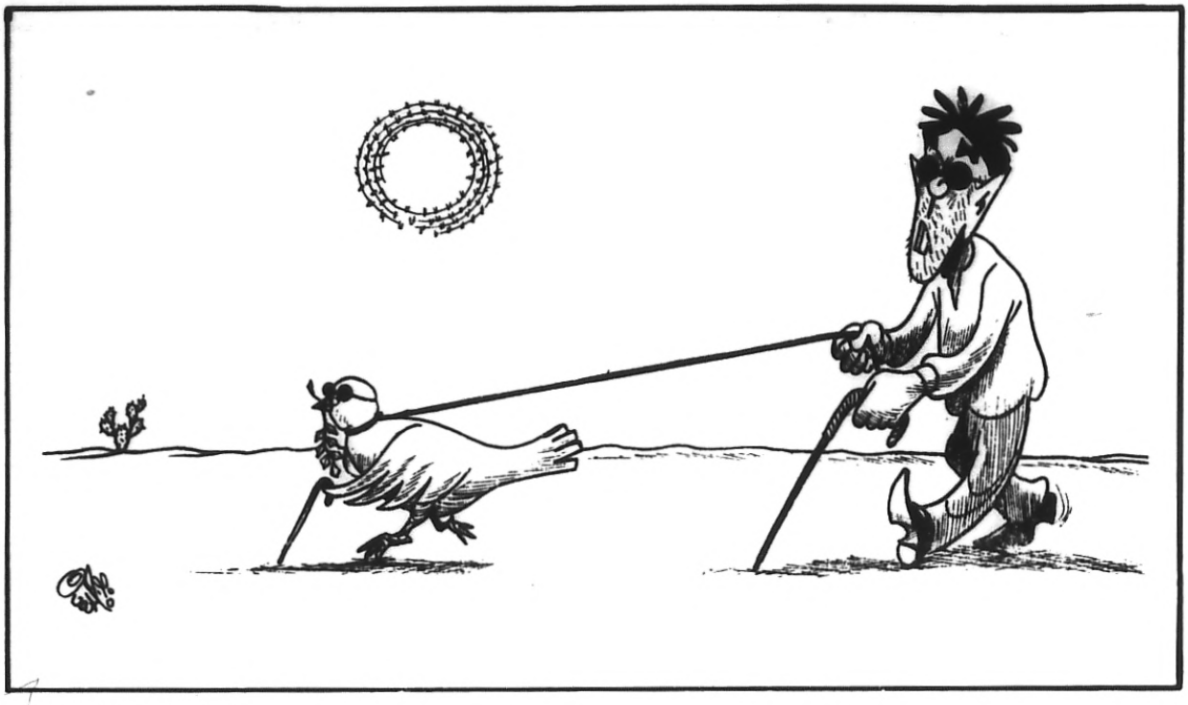

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS

The six-day *Al Quds* newspaper workers' strike over a pay dispute, the escalating civil war in Lebanon, and the visit to Sudan by PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat were the main stories in the local papers this week.

All three daily Palestinian newspapers gave front-page coverage and published solidarity ads with the striking workers of Al Quds newspaper.

The violent battles in Beirut and around Sidon between opposing militias received news and photo coverage by the local dailies.

Al Fajr and *Al Sha'ab* gave prominence to the visit by Arafat to Sudan and its new military government, while *Al Mithaq* continued to praise the Salvation Front and attack Arafat's policies.

The US Administration: Past and Present

Reagan's visit to West Germany seems to be so important as to command world attention. But current events, with the disasters and devastation, seem to be far from receiving such attention.

We don't want to discuss Reagan's visit. What we want to discuss is the nature of the world media that keeps them silent at the US refusal to seize the opportunity for peace offered by the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement. Will the US continue to adhere to its codeword "no" regarding Palestinian rights?

We ask that the US attitude be revealed. The US insistence on its position threatens peace not only in the Middle East but in the world.

AL FAJR
May 3

Decisive Month in Lebanon

Events in Lebanon are dangerously escalating. Next June, according to news reports, will be the decisive month. But in whose favour? Will Lebanon be turned into sectarian cantons? Or will it discover that unity is the way out of its crisis?

If Lebanon, after the Israeli withdrawal in June, is divided, then Israel will achieve its goal. But if a miracle takes place and national unity is restored, then Israel's withdrawal will be a real one.

AL FAJR
May 6

The British Attitude

The PLO was severely critical of the new British stand toward the Palestinian cause. The British position, however, has never been objective or neutral, but it was covered by the umbrella of the loose European positions.

This British position is compatible with the American position, which tries to find an alternative to the PLO. No doubt Thatcher's government, which faces internal problems, will continue its anti-Palestinian policy.

Britain is supposed to atone for its historical mistake in Palestine. But it seems that Thatcher intends to go ahead with her policy.

AL SHA'AB
May 6

Salaries and Wage Erosion

Unemployment, taxes, and high prices are not the only problems affecting the economic and social conditions of the Arabs in the occupied territories. There is also the problem of wage erosion due to the constant devaluation of the *shekel* [Israeli currency].

The government teachers are facing this problem. Therefore they are staging a warning strike, to begin this morning. The employees of al-Quds newspaper are suffering from the same problem. Other factions of our people here suffer from it also.

The national institutions solved this problem by linking wages to the Jordanian *dinar* at its market value. But some local institutions are trying to evade this arrangement. All are required to join hands in order to find a satisfactory solution to this problem.

AL FAJR
May 7

Arab-Palestinian Relations

Yasir Arafat's visit to Sudan stems from the PLO's interest in strengthening its relations with Arab regimes. Sudan, under the leadership of Siwar al-Dhahab, was careful to declare Sudan's support of the Palestinian cause and the PLO.

Yasir Arafat emphasised the importance of Egypt's return to the Arab ranks and the importance of strengthening relations with Cairo outside the context of Camp David. He also emphasised the significance of improving relations with Syria, provided that the Palestinian decision remains intact. He reiterated our belief in the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement. There is also a hint in Arafat's refusal to confirm or deny a report that a Libyan delegation visited Sudan during the same period. This means that the Palestinian position is still open for the normalisation of relations with Libya.

The inevitability of this unified Arab stand is based on the belief that it is the only way to achieve a just solution to the Palestinian problem.

AL FAJR
May 8

The Teachers' Strike

Teachers are employees who bear the brunt of the economic crisis. When the teacher heads for work in the morning, he or she usually thinks of so many cares...how to feed the children, how to pay the rent... and hundreds of other worries.

Above all the teacher has to suffer every month as a result of the erosion in salaries. The Palestinian teacher in the occupied territories is forced not to seek his right to promotion and training. He has to accept arbitrary transfer and dismissal orders without even demanding the right to have a union to defend him.

The teachers' warning strike yesterday illustrates the bad conditions of the teachers, who are not asking for the impossible.

AL SHA'AB
May 8

Arab Lawyers Petition High Court for Union

The Arab Lawyers Committee plans to petition the Israeli High Court after Israeli authorities rejected May 4 a committee request to form a union, *Al Fajr* has learned. The decision to pursue the matter was reached during a meeting of the committee administration May 5. The High Court is the only court that can handle petitions against the Israeli military authorities.

The committee, which has been acting as a union since it was established in 1980, had sent a letter to the Israeli military commander of the West Bank three months ago requesting permission to establish a union. Jordanian laws in the West Bank permit the formation of a lawyers union. The committee referred specifically to Law No. 11, dated 1966, which deals with the matter and, like all Jordanian laws, is still officially in effect in the West Bank.

The committee received a decisive "no" to the request early last week. The military based its answer on the argument that "since existing military orders forbid the establishment of military or political organisations in the occupied territories, we reject your request." Other lawyers bmitted a similar application in 1972, which was also turned down.

Although lawyers did not expect a favourable answer from the military, they did not appreciate the explanation which hinted that their planned union would be something other than a union of professional lawyers. Bethlehem lawyer and member of the administrative body of the committee, Usama Odeh, told *Al Fajr* that, "in our letter we gave them all the legal reasons why we can establish a union. There were no possible loopholes. Their answer, we believe, is insufficient and unconvincing, and that is why we are going to the High Court."

The lawyers are now preparing their case and hope to present it to the High Court within a few weeks.

The West Bank branch of the Jordanian Lawyers Union has officially been on strike since 1967. The lawyers' strike was in protest of Israeli practices and fundamental changes in existing laws and court systems. Over 250 striking members of the Jordanian Lawyers Union are paid on a monthly basis by the Joint Committee with funds from the Arab Lawyers Association. Working Palestinian lawyers have never had a union to represent them since 1967. They cannot be members of the Jordanian union.

LEARN ARABIC WITH ARABS IN JERUSALEM

The Arab Council for Public Affairs Announces

An Intensive, Two-Month Arabic Course for foreign students

July 1 – August 30

The course will include: day-long teaching workshops, boarding arrangements in furnished apartments and rooms, visits to Arab homes, tours of the country, and more.

For Further Information, write:

Arab Council for Public Affairs
Cultural Department
P.O. Box 19839, Jerusalem

Many people attend the opening of a clinic in Dheisheh camp May 7./AO photo.

Calendar

May 10

Conference: On Palestinian culture before 1948, sponsored by *Mawakeb* magazine. At the Grand New Hotel, Nazareth. Admission: US$25 for full weekend with meals and accommodation; US$10 for one night only; free for talks only. First session on Palestinian society from 3:30 – 7:30 pm. Speakers: Ghazi Falah, Boulos Farah, Miriam Mira'i. Entertainment at 9:00 pm. Continues May 11, 12 from 9:00 am – 6:30 pm. Tel:(065) 55404.

Theatre: *Men Have Heads*, performed by the al-Rahala Theatre Troupe, at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre in East Jerusalem, 7:00 pm. Also showing May 11, 12 at 7:00 pm. Tel:(02) 288189.

May 11

Conference: Second Day of *Mawakeb* conference includes a morning session (9:00 – 11:30) on Culture in Palestine. Speakers: Hanna Abu Hanna, Dr Sami Mar'i, Dr Said Zidani, Khalil Nakhleh. Afternoon session (3:30 – 6:00) on Palestinian Heritage. Speakers: Shukri Aref, Mon'em Haddad, Ghani Ghani, Abd al-Latif al-Barghouthi. Entertainment at 9:00 pm.

Seminar: *The Image of the Arab in Hebrew Literature*, sponsored by the West Bank and Gaza Writers Union. Speakers include Salman Natour, Antoine Shalhal, and Mai Khatib. At the Federation of Professional Unions, Beit Hanina, 2:00 pm.

Bazaar: Sponsored by the Women's Organisation of the Greek Orthodox community in Ramallah. At the Greek Orthodox Church, Ramallah, 10:30 am. Bazaar continues May 11, 12, 10:30 am – 6:00 pm.

Weight Lifting Contest: At Jamil Cinema in Ramallah, 9:00 am.

Music: An evening with *al-Manar* group led by singer Bassam Bishara, sponsored by the Catholic Action Club, 8:00 pm. Tel:(02) 743277.

May 12

Conference: Third day of the *Mawakeb* conference includes morning session (9:00 – 11:30) on Trends in Palestinian Literature. Speakers: Dr Fahd Abu Khadra, Dr George Kanazeh, Fawzi Abdullah, and Riad Aghbariyeh.

Commemoration: For the late mayor of Ramallah, Karim Khalaf. Sponsored by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, Beit al-Saddaqa, Nazareth. 3:00 pm.

May 14

Bazaar: For charity, sponsored by the Young Muslim Women's Association in Jerusalem. In the association's Shu'fat offices, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm. Continues May 15, 15, same time.

May 16

Theatre: *A Chosen Neighbourhood*, by the Jerusalem al-Jawal Company, at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theatre in East Jerusalem, 7:00 pm. Tel:(02) 288189.

Music: Bach Organ Festival Recital, by Elizabeth Roloff. One of a series of twelve weekly concerts on Thursday evenings to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Johann Sebastian Bach. At the Church of the Redeemer, Muristan road (Old City), Jerusalem, 8:30 pm. Tickets available at door. Tel:(02) 282543/286654.

The Eye and the Tooth

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and reduced it to mere depiction of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This has deprived the play of various levels of interpretation for the war between the two brothers. This first war could have been a reference to a cosmic war between all nations, or an unnamed local war between one nation and another. Perhaps it was a war of class conflict, or a play in which we see the nature of conflicts in general. The audience could have seen it as a reflection of a state of endless war. They also might have interpreted it as an accurate view of life in which joy and calamity are intermingled. Perhaps the play was intended to warn the audience against placing much faith in their leaders who drag them into wars.

El-Hakawati's director, Francois Abu Salem, justified the change to a more direct theme by saying: "We want to satisfy the members of the audience who always demand meaningful theatre from us. The audience was confused. If we present an unclear play, they will accuse us of ridiculing them." Actor Radi Shehadeh, who played the part of Abu Rustum, said the changes were the result of the communication between the El-Hakawati troupe and the audience.

In spite of the changes which weakened the play, it remains a distinguished presentation far above the other concrete, naive plays performed by other West Bank theatrical troupes. El-Hakawati is more sophisticated in its use of modern theatrical techniques. *The Story of the Eye and the Tooth* is also more sophisticated in its political message. Faith in a brighter future is placed upon the shoulders of the younger generation, ie, Sara and Tanza'a. The play sheds light on the deficiencies of Abu Rustum and Yosef Ben Shlomo. Abu Rustum is unable to get his message across to Tanza'a and Afifeh because he fails to understand their daily needs. His rhetorical speeches cannot lighten the burden of war. Yosef Ben Shlomo suffers from the same incapabilities. Therefore, Sara and Tanza'a are not convinced that they should not get married. Tanza'a is unable to read the book of revolution his father gives him.

This message is addressed to both Palestinians and Israelis. It is a call to the leaders to stop and listen to their followers who want to end the conflict. However, it is not presented very well. For example, there is no concrete evidence of the tension between Abram, who never likes the war and feels sympathy with the lifeless figures, and his leader, Yosef Ben Shlomo. Abram, who grows old and never marries, understands that he has lost everything in the war. He will never find a wife and have children. But he does nothing definite to oppose Yosef. The same can be said for Owath, who shares Abram's feelings about the war but remains loyal to Abu Rustum. This important message refers to the gap between both Abu Rustum and Yosef Ben Shlomo and their followers. But it is not presented well in the play and is difficult to get.

The play, even after its simplification, was attacked by some non-professional critics who imposed their own political ideas on the play. It has become, after the changes, an easily understood production for a politically-oriented audience who want to see a play made up of their own concrete world view, not of more general and universal themes. ■

WEEKLY REVIEW

Jerusalem physicians meet in solidarity with the Hospice Hospital May 4 to protest attempts to close it./AO photo

May 2, 1985

CURFEW ON CAMPS

Israel Radio reported many incidents of stone-throwing in the West Bank. Israeli cars were stoned near Jalazon refugee camp and Israeli forces closed the area. Stone-throwing incidents took place near Nablus also. A curfew was imposed on al-Arroub camp near Hebron after an Israeli bus was stoned.

TRIALS

The military court in Ramallah sentenced Marwan Abdullah Nufal, 18, of Beit Sahour to one-and-a-half years in prison and an equal term suspended. The court also sentenced Ra'fat Mahmoud Zahlan, 15, to one year in jail and three years suspended. Both were arrested last January.

LAND CONFISCATION

The Ramallah military governor notified the owners of Jebel Deir Surur of 'Aboud, west of Ramallah, that their land had been confiscated. He gave them 45 days to file an objection. The owners — Bajes Hamed, Suleiman al-Sousa, and Ibrahim Rida — refused to sign the notification.

PHYSICIANS CONDEMN ATTEMPTS TO CLOSE HOSPICE

The Physicians Union in Jerusalem reaffirmed during a meeting at the Hospice Hospital their condemnation of Israeli attempts to shut down the hospital. The physicians signed a petition protesting the Israeli steps. They held the Israeli Health Ministry responsible for carrying out international conventions and improving health conditions in the hospital.

BOY SENTENCED TO JAIL

The Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced a 12-year-old boy, Iyad Ali Asi of al-Bireh, to two months in jail and four months suspended. He was charged with preparing a petrol bomb and planning to use it.

May 3, 1985

GAZANS SENTENCED

The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Ahmad Mohammed Hajab to 20 years in prison on political charges. He was also given an additional one year imprisonment and another year suspended for "contempt of court." The court also sentenced Subhi Mustafa al-Wadiya of al-Shuja'iya to 25 months in prison and 15 months suspended for membership in an illegal organisation and making explosive charges. The same court sentenced Mohammed Ibrahim al-Tartour to 45 months in prison for membership and training in arms.

STUDENT RELEASED

Israeli authorities released Idris al-Ja'abari after two weeks in custody. He was fined IS50,000 for stone-throwing.

May 5, 1985

ISRAELI CARS STONED

The driver of an Israeli car was injured when his car was stoned on the new road between Jerusalem and Ma'aleh Adumim settlement. Israeli soldiers searched the area.

JORDANIANS REQUESTED TO ALLOW WB AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS INTO JORDAN

JERICHO — The Jordanian authorities have refused to allow truckloads of agricultural products from the West Bank to enter Jordan through the bridges. The head of the Cooperative Society for Agricultural Marketing in Jenin called upon the Jordanian authorities to grant the permission as soon as possible before the onion harvest is ruined.

JAIL AND FINES

An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced 22-year-old Mohammed Nimr Nasir, of Jenin camp, to one month in prison and three months suspended and a fine of IS150,000. The court also sentenced Khamis Judeh Farraj, of Jalazon camp, near Ramallah, to three months suspended. He was released after the trial, since he spent the sentence in pretrial detention.

Majid Mohammed Zuraiki and Mohammed Qasem 'Aqel, both of Jenin, were sentenced to one month in prison and six months suspended. Each was fined IS300,000. They are charged with demonstrating and throwing stones at Israeli cars.

May 6, 1985

7 SHOPS REOPENED

Seven shops were reopened in al-Bireh. Israeli authorities had closed a total of 22 shops following the killing of an Israeli settler in the area. The authorities opened the shops in three stages. These were the last shops to be reopened.

3 ARAB BOYS ARRESTED

Israeli authorities arrested three Arab boys under 10 years old in Jerusalem for throwing stones at Israeli vehicles on the Jerusalem-Jericho road.

FENCE AT TEL RUMEIDA

Israeli military authorities began a project aimed at fencing off the Tel Rumeida plot in Hebron, the Israeli daily *Al Hamishmar* reported. The area, originally owned by Arabs has been under dispute because of Jewish settlers' recurring attempts to settle there.

RED CROSS OFFICIALS VISIT PRISONERS

Officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross paid visits to Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons and examined the conditions of the inmates.

May 7, 1985

LEGAL FIRST

GAZA — The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Islamic University Student Sa'di Mohammed Ainmar to two years in prison for membership in a student organisation. According to the court, the organisation is a member in the nationalist bloc inside the university.

This is the first time that a student has been jailed for campus activities termed "illegal."

WEST BANK KIDS JAILED

BETHLEHEM — Three youths from Dheisheh refugee camp were sentenced to four years in prison and a similar suspended sentence by the Israeli military court in Ramallah. They are: Mohammed Mahmoud al-Fararjah, 14; Ra'ed Ramadan, 14; and Ahmad Mahmoud al-Ja'afreh, 15.

The court also sentenced 14-year-old Usama Gharib of Dheisheh to one-and-a-half years in prison and an equal suspended sentence. He was charged with throwing petrol bombs at Rabbi Moshe Levinger and at army vehicles.

Ghazi Sa'id Na'ssan of al-Mughiyer village was convicted by the court of storming an Israeli army camp and was sentenced to one-and-a-half years in prison and an equal suspended sentence.

A May 1 celebration sponsored by workers and employees of the Electricity Company held at Freres College./AO photo

Al-Quds Strike

Continued from page 1

According to the agreement, *Al Quds'* publisher agreed to pay all his employees in dinars or their equivalent in Israeli shekels at the market exchange rate on the 30th of every month. The agreement also barred the publisher from firing any employee for a period of three months or for reasons having to do with the strike. The employees, on the other hand, agreed to abide by strict working hours.

The striking employees were joined in their protest by many union representatives throughout the West Bank. The Printing Press Workers Union in Jerusalem, in which 42 of the striking workers are members, adopted the demands and stood by the workers and their elected committee day and night until their demands were met. The Arab Lawyers Committee, the General Federation of Trade Unions, and the Arab Journalists Association supported the strikers. Local newspapers gave the strike front-page coverage, detailing the employees' demands. They also published several ads from local institutions expressing support for the employees in their struggle against *Al Quds* publisher.

Radwan Abu Ayyash, the newly-elected president of the Arab Journalists Association (AJA), said in the press conference May 5 that the AJA supported the demands of *Al Quds* employees. He demanded, on behalf of the AJA, that the employees be given their rights and that none of them be fired. He also urged institutions and individuals to contribute money to the special fund already set up by the Printing Workers Union to assist the striking employees.

The AJA called for a one-hour work-stoppage May 7 in a show of solidarity with *Al Quds* employees. Many journalists from all local newspapers, except *Al Mithaq*, stopped work between 11:00-12:00 am and went to the *Al Quds* building, where the striking employees were holding a daily sit-in at the entrance.

Abu Zuluf threatened to fire all the current employees and hire a new staff to run the paper. In 1973, *Al Quds* editors and writers went on strike over a work dispute. At that time Abu Zuluf fired them all and immediately brought in new recruits to keep the paper running. This time striking employees included the print shop staff as will, making their replacement more difficult.

Political Prisoners

Continued from page 16

Relief Committees

In'ash al-Usra, the Family Rehabilitation Society, provides the most organised programme of assistance to prisoners' families. In March 1984, the society established a home for children of martyrs and prisoners. Currently 86 children live in the home, where all kinds of services, as well as education and professional training, are provided at the society's expense. The home can provide services for 150 girls aged one to 22 years.

The society also arranges the financial sponsoring of the sons and daughters of martyrs and prisoners by foster parents throughout the world. According to the Rehabilitation Society's 1983-84 yearbook, more than 600 children have been sponsored by foster parents in this programme.

Another service they provide is free vocational training in the society's centre for prisoners' daughters. This includes needlework, sewing, and secretarial training. They occasionally provide other forms of assistance like medical aid when called upon.

The Union of Charitable Associations in Jerusalem — an umbrella organisation for all charitable societies in the Jerusalem district — provides several different services to prisoners' families. Dr Amin al-Khatib, head of the union, said they provide assistance to any family seeking aid from them. He told *Al Fajr* that the union provides services ranging from social welfare aid to education to professional training to medical care. The union has been providing assistance to some prisoners' families in the Jerusalem area after the Israeli social welfare department recently stopped giving them aid. As for medical services, al-Khatib said he and Dr Abdullah Sabri have opened their clinic for free services to all prisoners' families. Maqassed Hospital in Jerusalem also provides free medical treatment to prisoners' families, he said.

The Union of Charitable Societies helps enroll prisoners' children in the union-supported schools like Dar al-Tifl, al-Nizamiyeh, al-Fatat al-Laji'ah, and professional training institutes like Dar al-Aytam al-Islamiyeh.

The RC and the Committee of Prisoners and Their Families told *Al Fajr* they have an ambitious plan to provide complete medical care to prisoners' families in the future. Aryan said this project will be carried out as soon as funds become available.

Important as it is for Palestinian political prisoners to know their physical needs and those of their families are being met, it is also important for them to have moral support in their struggle. Until recently, solidarity activities have been spontaneous, with prisoners' relatives carrying the burden of rallying support.

In 1984, however, the four women's committees — the Working Women's Committee, the Union of Women's Work Committees, the Palestinian Women's Committee, and the Women's Committee for Social Action — established subcommittees to organise demonstrations of solidarity. These committees, working in close coordination with one another, have succeeded in organising public support for prisoners during strikes. They have organised sit-in strikes at the ICRC offices, publicised the needs of prisoners, and organised popular rallies on specific occasions. They work alone in this area, however, which puts a heavy burden on their shoulders, one that should be shared by other prisoner solidarity groups.

Hani Issawi, who served 10 years on political charges, said that alongside the material support, prisoners have an even more important need to find the Palestinian public aware of their suffering and ready to stand with them when they go on strike. "Without such moral support, the Israeli authorities can easily crush any strike inside the prison," he said. Issawi pointed out that during the one-and-a-half-month Asqalan prison strike in February, the wide publicity — particularly in the final days — played a decisive role in getting the Israeli authorities to yield to their demands. He said that had the publicity campaign been mobilised from the start, the strike would not have lasted for such a long time.

Ex-political prisoners point out that there are no institutions to help ex-prisoners to readjust to society after their release. Issawi explained that this problem began to surface in recent years when many political prisoners who served long terms were released. Cut off from Palestinian society for several years, those prisoners find it much more difficult to locate employment and housing.

Palestinian ex-prisoners and representatives of women's committees say that without the formation of solidarity committees to stand by prisoners during strikes and to publicise their conditions all year round, solidarity work will fall short of achieving its goals. As one ex-prisoner said, "The fact that all improvements thus far achieved were gained through strikes shows how important it is to have solidarity groups coordinating actions with prisoners." ■

Iron Fist

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Yaron: "Everybody has a desire for revenge, somewhere deep down.

Q: **"What about the values you were brought up on?"**

Shimon: "How long will they keep blabbering away about values and education? We're human beings and we don't want to be here. We don't like doing the things we're ordered to do. When I phone home and my mother starts crying I feel that I shouldn't be here. And then they come along with their preaching about values and education and all that, but it has nothing to do with what's going on in Lebanon..."

Q. **"Do you ever think about death?"**

Shimon: "We think about death all the time... Death is our constant companion up here. Wherever you go, death is close behind."

Erez: "Just yesterday an explosive device went off about 50 metres away from were I was standing. The shrapnel went flying all over the place."

Shimon: "The more you think about death, the more frightened you become. I lie in bed thinking: what the fuck am I thinking about death for? Sometimes I get to thinking that I'm not even 21. I don't want to die in some shithole house... You see, I feel something has happened to me since I arrived in Lebanon. I've become a more violent person, not that I've internalised Lebanese norms. When I go home to the kibbutz I can become myself once again... but when I return to Lebanon, I don't have a moment's peace and quiet. That's the way it is: the government is taking its time, but we're sick and tired of Lebanon. I'm doing things I never dreamed I'd have to do. But I have no choice..." (Translation:by Edna Pe'er, Yediot Ahranot,March 29,1985)

Fate or Government Policy?

During the first few weeks of the war I heard the following story from a company commander: "I'm anxious about what will happen in Lebanon now that we've teamed up with [the Phalange, who] operate according to a different system of values. Yesterday they captured a Muslim or a Druze — it's not clear which — and tied his hands to one jeep and his feet to another. Then they started driving in opposite directions. I pointed my gun at them, ordering them to halt before the fellow was torn in half. I reported the incident to my superiors and they casually remarked that it was common behaviour among the Phalange."

The massacre at Sabra and Shatila occurred a few months later...

We made common cause with the forces of darkness in order to wage a holy crusade — the destruction of the terrorist infrastructure in Lebanon — and along the way we destroyed our own infrastructure as well. Now we no longer have an infrastructure, we have a shitstructure...

A few weeks ago on TV, there was a report about Metulla in the wake of the withdrawal. We heard a fellow by the name of Gino say, "The army ought to remain in Lebanon. More people die in traffic accidents."

It was perhaps the most idiotic type of reasoning possible...

"But you have a son up in Lebanon," the interviewer said to Gino.

"Let him stay up there," replied Gino. "If it's his fate to die, he'll die; and if not, he won't."

The editor of the broadcast took that line out of the report. (Translation: by Yonatan Geffen, Sof Shavua, March 22, 1985)

POSTSCRIPT:

Rabin's 'Scorched Earth' Policy through the Prism of the Vietnamese War

What most disturbs thoughtful Americans about Vietnam is the prevalence of genocidal thought patterns in our approach to the conflict. By this I do not mean merely the remarks of wild-eyed generals about "dropping a nuke" or frustrated soldiers talking about "paving the country over from one end to the other." Official policy may be expressed in more restrained language but the euphemisms do not entirely hide the same genocidal assumptions. "Rooting out the infrastructure," for example, means essentially that you no longer kill only soldiers carrying weapons but every civilian who might be related to or sympathetic to those soldiers. Since in a civil war there is no way of telling this at a glance, it comes to mean killing everyone in a specified area...

We know from vast experience that military force is ineffectual against civilian populations, that colonial expeditionary forces are ineffectual against organised indigenous popular movements of any size, and that military dictators cannot broaden their own base of support. We watched carefully while France failed, and then repeated all her mistakes on a larger scale. We helped to establish international principles in the UN, at Geneva, and at Nuremberg, which we then violated or ignored... We stress that every human life is a thing of value... yet engage in the mass slaughter of innocent persons by the most barbarous means possible and show no qualms about it (resistance to the war has been largely in terms of expense, and the loss of *American* lives)...

For some people, the fact that an individual or group has been defined as an enemy and a combatant justifies whatever horror one wishes to inflict upon him... however, in Vietnam it is difficult or impossible to determine who the enemy is. We have repeatedly been trapped in our own rhetoric on this matter — initially portraying ourselves as aiding a friendly Vietnamese majority against a small alien and sinister minority. This created the expectation that villages "liberated" from the Viet Cong would welcome us with open arms... When it turned out that they were not pleased to be rescued from their husbands, brothers, sons, and fathers, we burned their villages and destroyed their crops... (Excerpt: *The Pursuit of Loneliness*, by Philip Slater,Penguin Books,1970). ■

Community Extends Material and Moral Support to Political Prisoners

by Sami al-Aboudi

Palestinian prisoners, during the past 18 years under Israeli occupation, have carried out repeated protest actions, including extended hunger strikes, to achieve their basic rights as political detainees. Among other things, they have fought for the right to receive clothes from home, books, magazines, newspapers, transistor radios, and family visits. Prisoners paid a heavy price for their protests and at least three political detainees died as a direct result of strike action.

In the end it is the families of prisoners who must subsidise their sons' welfare in prison and provide basic necessities that prison authorities permit but refuse to pay for. Yet many of the detainees' families face severe financial difficulties in meeting even the expense of bus trips to visit their sons. Often it is the imprisoned members of the family who were the main income generators for the household.

Many Palestinian social institutions took it upon themselves to provide families with the necessary supplies for their relatives in prison. A few recently freed political detainees, released from Israeli prisons in the past few years, formed solidarity groups to support political prisoners and their families, knowing that such moral support is important to those in detention.

Up until now, prisoner solidarity groups have limited their actions to providing material and legal assistance. Some institutions have attempted to make up for the lack of family breadwinners by providing education and health care to prisoners' families. Ex-prisoners and local activists say, however, that there are no permanent solidarity committees responsible for rallying support for prisoner strikes or exposing prison conditions to local and international public opinion.

Social institutions in the occupied territories work under severe limitations imposed by Israeli prison authorities on what prisoners can receive from their families. The agencies also suffer from a lack of funds to fully meet the many needs of political prisoners.

One of the most important items requested by prisoners from all over the occupied territories on a regular basis is "civilian" underwear. Only in the past 10 years have they been allowed to regularly receive light undergarments for hot weather and long underwear for winter from their families. Before 1976, underwear was provided for prisoners by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), but only in very limited quantities and to the most needy prisoners. Prisoners receive an initial two pairs of prison-issue underwear at the beginning of their detention, but many complain that it is of poor quality and wears out quickly. After 1976, the Israeli authorities began allowing prisoners to receive one pair of longjohns and a pair of jockey shorts once a year.

The central committee of the Red Crescent Societies in the West Bank and Gaza (RC), in coordination with the Committee of Prisoners and Their Families, began providing prisoners from the Jerusalem district with the underwear. This includes prisoners from the Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Jericho area. Izz al-Din al-Aryan, general-secretary of the RC, told *Al Fajr* that prisoners' relatives usually come to the office on prearranged days to receive the yearly distribution of clothes. The families, in turn, bring the clothes to their relatives in prison during family visits. In addition to winter longjohns, the RC provides prisoners with a sweater and pair of wool socks. Khalil Abu Ziad, head of the Committee of Prisoners and Their Families, told *Al Fajr* there are plans to provide prisoners with pyjamas if the authorities give permission this summer. Up until now, prisoners were forced to sleep in their clothes. The demand for pyjamas was agreed to by prison authorities following the famous Jnaid prison strike in September 1984.

Mothers of Palestinian prisoners in Asqalan prison held a sit-in at the Jerusalem Red Cross in support of their sons' month-and-a-half-long hunger strike March and April 1985./MS photo

In'ash al-Usra, the Family Rehabilitation Society in al-Bireh, also provides more than 340 prisoners in the West Bank with winter and summer clothes. They also meet the needs of the more than 25 women prisoners held at the Neve Tertza prison in Ramleh. This is done, however, in coordination with the ICRC, and not prisoners' families. The clothes ration includes sweaters made in the society's factory. Recently the Livia Rokach Memorial Fund was established in Jerusalem for the benefit of Neve Tertza women prisoners. Donations received by the fund are spent on providing necessary items for Palestinian women prisoners.

In the rest of the West Bank the Unions of Charitable Societies in Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm, and Hebron supply the clothes to the families who, in turn, bring them to their imprisoned relatives.

In the Gaza Strip, the Women's Union has been providing services for Gaza prisoners since the early 1970's. The union occasionally has been forced to seek additional assistance from West Bank institutions to help it meet the needs of the large number of Gaza prisoners. Aryan of the RC said they donated sweaters requested by the Gazan union. "We are always ready to step in and provide assistance when we are asked," he said.

The most unique contribution of the RC in cooperation with the Committee of Prisoners and Their Families has been in providing transportation for prisoners' families who want to make use of the recently instituted second monthly visit. A once monthly visit has been allowed since 1967 with low-cost transportation provided by the ICRC on charter buses. The RC and the committee agreed to pay for the second monthly visit after prisoners won this right in the winter of 1981. Abu Ziad said the committee and the RC began by providing one bus to Nafha prison early in 1982. He explained that they chose Nafha prison in the Naqab because there was no public transport to it. They slowly extended the service to all other prisons but prisoners' families must pay a transportation fee much higher than the first monthly visit subsidised by the ICRC.

Besides clothes, prisoner activists say there is a severe shortage of reading material provided to prisoners. They won the right in 1976 to receive literary and cultural texts after long strikes. Since then, prison authorities have allowed each prisoner to receive one book from outside twice a year. But these books are subject to clearance by the prison censor.

Abu Ziad said the committee, on occasion, provides books. He said, however, that their budget does not allow them a free hand in providing reading material.

Prisoner activists say that books are a vital means by which prisoners maintain contact with the outside world and thus must be given priority by local institutions which provide services to prisoners.

Other material assistance is occasionally offered. Aryan, who owns the Balsam Medical Factory in Ramallah, said that the RC occasionally provides medical supplies like eyeglasses, hearing aids, canes, and other aids.

The pioneer organisation for legal aid to prisoners in the occupied territories is the Quakers, based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Quaker's Jerusalem-based office opened in 1974 and began providing financial aid to pay prisoners' legal fees. Sources in the office said they pay a portion of the legal fees after conducting a thorough inquiry into the prisoners' personal background to determine their need and eligibility for financial aid.

The Arab Lawyers Committee recently established a subcommittee to provide free legal aid for prisoners whenever approached for help by their families.

Continued on page 15

On entering prison, after sentencing, political prisoners surrender most of their personal belongings and have them replaced by standardised prison gear. Below is an inventory of items given up and received at various stages of internment.

During Pre-Trial Detention (except in Fara'a):

1. They wear the clothes they were arrested in. Infrequently relatives are permitted to bring a change of clothes.
2. A five-centimetre-thick sponge mattress.
3. Six thin blankets.
4. A teacup and spoon.
5. Two towels.

Materials Confiscated at Beginning of Prison Term:

1. Shoelaces.
2. Belt.
3. Watch.
4. Money.
5. ID card.
6. All metal items.

During Prison Term:

1. Prisoners keep civilian clothes from pre-trial detention but are not allowed to wear them.
2. Issued prison uniform which includes:
   two pairs of pants
   two shirts
   a sweater
   two pairs of underwear
   two pairs of socks
   a pair of boots
   a pair of slippers
3. A five-centimetre-thick sponge mattress.
4. Six blankets.
5. A teacup and spoon.
6. Two towels.